

BEFORE THE  
CALIFORNIA BUREAU OF STATE AUDITS (BSA)

In the matter of

Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC)

Applicant Review Panel (ARP) Public Meeting

555 Capitol Mall, 4th Floor, Suite 455  
Sacramento, CA 95814

MONDAY, August 9, 2010

9:14 A.M.

Reported by Peter Petty

## APPEARANCES

### Members Present

Nasir Ahmadi, Meeting Chair

Lynne Reich, His Assistant

Mary Camacho, Vice Chair

Bob La Liberte, Her Assistant

Kerri Spano

Raul Villanueva, Her Assistant

### Staff Present

Stephanie Ramirez-Ridgeway, Panel Counsel

Diane Hamel, Executive Secretary

Steven B. Russo, Chief of Investigations

### Interviewees

Stephen P. Allen

Melissa R. Michelson

Daniel Martin Seagondollar

Charles S. Afflerbach

James E. Aldredge

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1 PROCEEDINGS

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: The hour being 9:14, let's  
3 go back on record.

4 Good morning, panelists. Today, we have five  
5 applicants to interview. Our first applicant is Mr.  
6 Stephen P. Allen, and he is here and has been set up and  
7 prepped.

8 Are you ready to begin, Mr. Allen?

9 MR. ALLEN: Yes.

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: As you know, we start  
11 right away. So, secretary, please start the clock.

12 What specific skills do you believe a good  
13 Commissioner should possess? Which do you not possess and  
14 how will you compensate for it? Is there anything in your  
15 life that would prohibit or impair your ability to perform  
16 all of the duties of a Commissioner?

17 MR. ALLEN: Of course, the skills that are  
18 required which you can others include the ability to meet  
19 deadlines as undertaking has a serious deadline that needs  
20 to be met. The ability to read and comprehend maps. I  
21 expect most of your applicants have that. But I know a  
22 lot of people do not. In the same way I can't read music,  
23 a lot of people cannot make sense out of a map.

24 Some comprehension sense of geography. If not  
25 going in, at least the ability to learn and use that.

1           A among things I have done, perhaps because of  
2 some jargon I may used it may not be clear that the zoning  
3 administrator in Plumas County does what a Planning  
4 Commission does in most jurisdictions and the idea there  
5 was to take the politics out of planning decisions, to  
6 have impartial decisions based on the laws and the  
7 regulations and not on the preferences of the person  
8 making the decision.

9           One of my big of the flaws is I lack the formal  
10 education for the work I've done. I also don't carry very  
11 well over electronic equipment.

12           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Does that conclude your  
13 answer?

14           MR. ALLEN: It does.

15           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Question two: Describe a  
16 circumstance from your personal experience where you had  
17 to work with others the resolve a conflict or difference  
18 of opinion. Please describe the issue and explain your  
19 role in addressing and resolving the conflict. If you are  
20 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
21 Commission, tell us how you may resolve conflicts that may  
22 arise among the Commissioners.

23           MR. ALLEN: One thing that I worked on was the  
24 Plumas County supervisorial redistricting. The Election  
25 Code requires the district be as nearly as equal in

1 population as they can be with consideration of other  
2 factors such as community of interest.

3           Plumas County has five large communities with  
4 about 50 smaller communities scattered among them, 44  
5 which are census designated places. I learned then and  
6 earlier that most people preferred that community of  
7 interest take precedence over everything else, including  
8 the requirement for equality of population. Even after  
9 that's explained, that's still their preference. The  
10 other part may be the law, but it's wrong.

11           Five large communities are nowhere near equal in  
12 population. They run about 32 percent, 22 percent a  
13 couple times, 11 percent -- or excuse me -- 13 percent and  
14 10 percent of the population of the county. So there's no  
15 way you're going to get districts that represent those  
16 populations exclusively and meet the equal population  
17 standard.

18           So coming up with something that was acceptable  
19 to the supervisors, acceptable to the public both  
20 individually and in their communities and meeting the  
21 requirements was my task. And presenting some initial  
22 proposals, some illustrations of issues that typically  
23 come up that would not work. But it's better to show than  
24 to just tell in a circumstance like that and making almost  
25 innumerable variations on the original themes until we

1 could get to something that was acceptable to everybody.

2           Unfortunately, not all communities could remain  
3 undivided. But the one where the potential divisions of  
4 the community was the most contentious issue. We were  
5 able to come up with a way to not divide that one. So it  
6 came out all right.

7           I don't know anybody yet who accepts that  
8 equality of population should take precedence over  
9 community of interest. And I spent a bit of time each  
10 meeting explaining the laws, explaining the latest set of  
11 proposals, and explaining why trying to cheat was not a  
12 good idea.

13           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Question three: How will  
14 the Commission's work impact the state? Which of these  
15 impacts will improve the state the most? Is there any  
16 potential for the Commission work to harm the state? And  
17 if so, in what ways?

18           MR. ALLEN: What would help would be districts  
19 that reflect community of interest as well as population  
20 as best that can be accomplished. The provision that the  
21 Senate districts in general be comprised of two assembly  
22 districts could help in that or if an urban district and a  
23 rural district were paired, it could actually offset any  
24 advantage gained by creating community of interest at one  
25 level and losing that at another.

1           Another thing that could go poorly is not giving  
2 enough weight to diversity of geography and population  
3 distribution. A lot of people who end up working with  
4 maps end up working with a flat map perspective where they  
5 lose site of things such as the topography and the effect  
6 of the road net on communications, for example.

7           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where  
8 you have had the work as part of a group to achieve a  
9 common goal. Tell us about the goal, describe your role  
10 in the group, and tell us how the group worked or did not  
11 work collaboratively to achieve the goal. If you are  
12 selected to serve on the Citizen's Redistricting  
13 Commission, tell us what you would do to foster  
14 collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure the  
15 Commission meets its legal deadlines.

16           MR. ALLEN: One thing I worked on was called the  
17 Almanor Regional Transportation Assessment.

18           The Almanor basin is one of the fastest growing  
19 areas in Plumas County. It also includes an area in  
20 Lassen County that has a major project at least by the  
21 proportion of that part of the state that's been proposed  
22 and is in process. The project involved Plumas, Lassen  
23 and Tehama Counties, occasionally Butte County, Caltrans,  
24 and the Forest Service. It was a long-range planning  
25 effort to identify transportation system improvements



1 needed for to deal with the area's growth and then ways of  
2 funding those improvements.

3           There was also public participation. My primary  
4 role was to provide planning information data on existing  
5 development and build out, projects in the works,  
6 development being talked about, and development potential  
7 within the existing general plan, including commercial and  
8 residential with projections for both.

9           We had a whole number of issues that took working  
10 together, working out different perspectives. One was on  
11 conflicting ways of projecting traffic volume from  
12 development projects. The standard is to use a manual  
13 prepared by the Institute of Transportation Engineers.  
14 Transportation agency such as Caltrans will use that.  
15 That gives trip generation rate from dwelling units of  
16 almost ten per day. We know from past traffic counts that  
17 outside of right in town we don't get that. We have a  
18 different county system based on past data that we used.

19           We presented that to Caltrans. Since it's not  
20 standard, they were reluctant to accept it. We did some  
21 further counts so that they could see the results and  
22 after that provision was included in the overall plan to  
23 take into account the county's method of determining  
24 project traffic volumes.

25           The importance of that for the whole project is

1 that the average would work out to about five trips per  
2 day rather than ten if the five is right. But you use the  
3 ten, you build twice the roads you need and that gets  
4 expensive among other things.

5           As far as the Commission, one thing I've noticed  
6 is that it does have a real deadline. And every time I've  
7 heard discussion of that or read discussion of that it's  
8 described as being at the end of an eight-and-a-half month  
9 work presented. Maybe everybody knows this, but Census  
10 Bureau has until April 1st to release the data that needs  
11 to be used and they do the state's in order of easiest to  
12 hardest. California is hardest. Last time around, the  
13 data came out right on the deadline. But it means there's  
14 three-and-a-half months where you're not working with that  
15 data -- three months where you're not working with the  
16 data which cuts the available work time to five-and-a-half  
17 months, not counting whatever time is going to be needed  
18 for the preparation of the report at the end. So that  
19 that actual time to work with the data could very well be  
20 four-and-a-half months.

21           That is not a lot of time where you're taking on  
22 a task of this magnitude. I think it's going to take a  
23 lot more work than a lot of people are expecting. One  
24 contribution I can make is awareness of that.

25           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of

1 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
2 from all over California who come from different  
3 backgrounds and different perspectives. If are selected  
4 to serve on the Commission, tell us about the specific  
5 skills you possess that will make you effective in  
6 interacting with the public.

7 MR. ALLEN: I think the ones that I used in my  
8 work which involved a lot of interacting with the public  
9 would help. Things such as to be honest with people,  
10 treat them with respect, treat them as individuals, listen  
11 to them try to hear and understand what they're saying.  
12 Don't listen to them for the purpose of counter-arguing.  
13 If you need to do that, first you need to know what  
14 they're saying, then you can do that better. If you don't  
15 understand something, say so.

16 Don't pretend to understand when you don't.  
17 Don't talk down to people. Avoid jargons, acronyms,  
18 initializations, anything like that, even if you have  
19 reason to assume you share a specialized language with  
20 someone. Easy example, DHS can either be the Department  
21 of Health Services or the Department of Homeland Security  
22 and there are issues where both could pertain. And you  
23 can end up talking past each other which doesn't help.

24 If you're not being understood, try a different  
25 approach. And watch for clues that you're not making

1 yourselves understood. Somebody disagreeing doesn't  
2 necessarily mean they don't understand. The issue with e  
3 quality of population versus community of interest is a  
4 ready example. People understood full well they just  
5 didn't like it.

6           The way we would explain local subdivisions and  
7 environmental review process to say a civil engineer with  
8 decades of California experience would be very different  
9 from how I would explain it to a civil engineer with the  
10 same amount of experience but entirely in Nevada. The way  
11 things work is very different. And that would be very  
12 different from how I would explain the same thing to  
13 someone off the street who wanted to find out what they  
14 would have to deal with trying to divide their property.  
15 They would all get the same information, but it would be  
16 interested differently with the goal that they end up  
17 knowing what they're getting themselves into. Remember  
18 you don't know everything. You can be wrong. And don't  
19 fake knowledge you don't have.

20           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: That concludes our five  
21 standard question-and-answer period.

22           Mr. Ahmadi, would you like to begin your 20  
23 minutes of questions?

24           CHAIR AHMADI: I have 20 minutes time I  
25 have allotted for myself, but before getting into those

1 questions, I have just one follow-up question about what I  
2 just heard you saying in response to question number four.  
3 And that was about when we were talking about -- when you  
4 were talking about the challenges related to the deadline  
5 or the short amount of time that the Commission has to  
6 deliver, it's the product which is the maps, could you  
7 share with me if you have thought about what could be your  
8 approach to at least help alleviate that constraint?

9           MR. ALLEN: Some things that could have to be  
10 known is how many meetings throughout the state would the  
11 Commission want to hold. There would be scheduling issues  
12 that as far as simple things such as travel time can  
13 support staff, use weekend time for travel time or does it  
14 have to be everything scheduled on weekdays, knowing that  
15 new maps prepared have to be available to the public for  
16 14 days before a meeting on them, how much drafts do  
17 people figure they need to have? You can't fit that many  
18 in that sort of time frame with that sort of lead time.

19           I would propose a front-loaded schedule once some  
20 of the detailed of the information were worked out,  
21 because if you happen to be lucky enough to get done fast,  
22 you're fine. But if you run out of time, you can't pull  
23 in more time from somewhere. So you need to be prepared  
24 to start fast, work fast, and if you need the time you  
25 didn't schedule for, have it ready for you.

1           The meetings that are required before maps are  
2 done could be done in the presumptive three months before  
3 the data are available. That has the problem that nobody  
4 participating will have the data to use as part of their  
5 participation, which is not beneficial to that short of  
6 meeting. But it's a way to schedule some things outside  
7 that compressed time frame once the data becomes  
8 available.

9           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

10           Is there anything else that you would probably do  
11 within those three months before the data becomes  
12 available?

13           MR. ALLEN: Whatever training is necessary,  
14 whatever work needs to be done on getting the staff  
15 together, sorting out what tasks are actually going to be  
16 undertaken by the Commission as a whole and what tasks are  
17 going to be done by staff. Sometimes you can with people  
18 doing mapping for you tell them I want lines to reflect  
19 these things, put it together for me. Other times you  
20 have to essentially stand there and point I want lines  
21 here, here, and here. That can take longer.

22           CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you, sir.

23           Next question I have is related to a statement on  
24 your application. You talk about you know, the practice,  
25 the experience that you have had with the Plumas County

1 redistricting. You mention something about social and  
2 political challenges. Could you please tell me a little  
3 more about that and how did you meet those challenges?

4 MR. ALLEN: Social and political challenges,  
5 those primarily came from the fact that distinction  
6 between two of the basic community sets in the county.  
7 There's the population that's tied to the old resource  
8 production economy, primarily timber in recent decades,  
9 some mining, some agriculture.

10 And then there as the second home retirement home  
11 population; education, affluence, different considerably  
12 between those. The areas that are heavily populated by  
13 the retirement and second home community, have a median  
14 household income about twice that of the areas that are  
15 most heavily populated by the resource production oriented  
16 community.

17 In one of the areas where a boundary had to be  
18 put and it had to be put -- it had to be adjusted into one  
19 portion of the county from one of the areas with 13  
20 percent of the population. There was geographically no  
21 other choice. The one area had 23 percent of the  
22 population had to lose three of those percentage points  
23 give or take a little. What those people would tell me is  
24 we don't want to be associated with those people to form  
25 the core aer of that other district. And the difference

1 between them is really economic and associated social  
2 differences and the political differences that flow from  
3 those.

4           We found a boundary that worked. It was in  
5 conjunction with one of those communities where one way  
6 for a boundary that would have worked would have split  
7 that community and their perspective was of the choices  
8 available, we do not want our community split. If that  
9 means we have to be put in the district we don't want to  
10 be in, we'll take that rather than being split.

11           CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you.

12           By the way, how much time did you have for that  
13 work?

14           MR. ALLEN: Let's see. From April 1st when the  
15 data came out until mid August, because of various  
16 election deadlines.

17           CHAIR AHMADI: A few months. Okay. Thank  
18 you so much.

19           MR. ALLEN: It took that time.

20           CHAIR AHMADI: Let me just collect my  
21 thoughts here. I had a number of questions I'm trying to  
22 decide which one to ask first.

23           Again, a question in regards to some information  
24 on your application which suggests that at some point you  
25 were in charge of the state census data center affiliated



1 in Plumas County?

2 MR. ALLEN: Yes.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: I'm just curious to know who  
4 did you interact with as part of that responsibility?

5 MR. ALLEN: Sorry. I didn't hear who did I what  
6 with.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Interact.

8 MR. ALLEN: Oh, well in part the State Department  
9 of Finance as far as they would be a primary source of  
10 information, plus I would report my activity back to them.

11 Census Bureau is another source of information.

12 And then various groups around the county and  
13 occasionally other counties who needed census information.  
14 The Community Development Commission, Housing Authority,  
15 the county's Economic Development Agency, the hospital  
16 districts, various other districts such as community  
17 services districts, a lot of individuals who were working  
18 on projects of their own, typically involving some sort of  
19 grant that required data, and students who needed  
20 information.

21 It became a lot easier once the Census Bureau put  
22 up American Fact Finder. I could teach people how to use  
23 that and they could go find anything they wanted.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you so much.

25 Let me ask you a somewhat technical question and

1 see if we can discuss this aspect of part of the  
2 responsibility of the Commission is to be in compliance  
3 with the legal requirement of course as you may know. In  
4 your mind, what are the benefits and detriments of  
5 focusing on geometric shape of a district?

6 MR. ALLEN: Benefits of the shape of a district?

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Correct. Benefits or  
8 detriments. I understand this is a technical question.

9 MR. ALLEN: That can be if a district comes out  
10 designed that it reflects some -- as much of a degree of  
11 community interest as possible and with a rural background  
12 communication are important, which really means roads that  
13 are open in winter. If you can't get from one side of the  
14 district to the other, it poses problems. Look at, say,  
15 Mono and Mariposa County. They border each other. They  
16 have a pretty extensive border. In winter, the only way  
17 you can get from one to the other is to go up to Carson  
18 Pass, if that happens to be open. And there is a good  
19 chance you may end up going to Carson City and back south  
20 depending on what the storms are doing at that time. So  
21 being able to travel the district helps a lot.

22 One that reflects community of interest, some of  
23 the travel concerns may in urban areas where there are  
24 plenty of roads would not be as great as they would be for  
25 say a rural area.

1           CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you so much.

2           The next question I have is I'm going to read  
3 this question to you. What does the phrase "equal  
4 population" mean to you? In your mind, what are some of  
5 the pros and cons to a rigid equal population rule?

6           MR. ALLEN: Well, the pros are -- the main pro is  
7 that you get equal representation in that you don't have  
8 someone trying to represent too many people and somebody  
9 too few. The biggest or one of the cons is that if you  
10 try -- if you hold too rigorously to equal, you can end up  
11 with dividing communities that ought not to be divided.

12           For example, with what I had to work with, with  
13 about 20,000 people, you're looking for a district that  
14 should come out to about 4,000, which means that 40  
15 percent are one percent. So if you're going to be five  
16 percent off, you're going to be 200 off.

17           If on the state-wide level you're looking at more  
18 like 400 to 500,000, put some zeros behind that, you can  
19 still stay within a regional amount of percentage but you  
20 may not -- you may be able to avoid putting some community  
21 in a district solely for the purpose of making it rigidly  
22 equal where it would be better off in another district of  
23 similar interest which would be within a reasonable range  
24 of equal. And since I always got asked that question, the  
25 reasonable range stops just short of what you're going to

1 get sued for exceeding.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you very much.

3 Secretary, how am I doing on time?

4 MS. HAMEL: You have six minutes.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't have any other  
6 questions. Thank you.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho, would you  
8 like to begin your questions?

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Sure. Mr. Allen,  
10 during your Plumas County redistricting work you  
11 performed, did you work with other staff? And if so, what  
12 was their involvement?

13 MR. ALLEN: It varied. First time in '81 I  
14 worked with the Planning Director. Essentially, my task  
15 was to come up with a few things. And then we'd go to the  
16 Board, and he'd do all the presentation work. And I'd be  
17 there to answer any technical questions regarding the  
18 numbers. The next time was similar, although I was doing  
19 more of the talking at that time.

20 The third time we had moved on the electronic  
21 mapping. I had taken some classes in it, but with my  
22 other duties I never had a chance to get any good at it.  
23 So I worked with our GIS person to prepare the maps.  
24 Other staff really did not want to be involved.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So you were the main

1 person on going out to the communities of interest and  
2 talking to them, performing the --

3 MR. ALLEN: Yeah. The meeting outside the  
4 meetings of the Board of Supervisors were set up by the  
5 Board when they felt like they needed to have community  
6 meetings of one sort or another. Since it was easily  
7 widely known I was doing the work, preparing the initial  
8 proposals and then the variations on those, I got plenty  
9 of phone calls from people. I got stopped all over the  
10 community: Post office, grocery store, at fire department  
11 meetings, whatever and talked to people at those times.  
12 And yes, I realize Commissioners have very strict  
13 limitations on how they can talk to people about  
14 redistricting.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: How do you see how you  
16 worked during the Plumas County redistricting and  
17 comparing those similarities and differences to being a  
18 Commissioner?

19 MR. ALLEN: Some of it depends on how hands on  
20 the Commission is going to be. In reading the  
21 requirements, it looks like it's a requirement to be very  
22 hands on. If it were the other way with staff preparing  
23 proposals and the Commissioners acting such as the Board  
24 of Supervisors did with me, it would be much less hands  
25 on. In many ways, that would actually be easier other

1 than having a decision and having to be responsible for it  
2 which is harder.

3           The hands on part I could see with 14 people  
4 involved could be very time consuming. When you're doing  
5 it by yourself, you look at the data, everything else you  
6 need to consider, which I won't get into unless you want  
7 me to. And beside I want lines here, here, and here for  
8 this next version we're taking to hearing. And the only  
9 person you have to discuss with is yourself and that  
10 usually goes quickly. If you need to discuss whether or  
11 not putting this community in the district to the left or  
12 the district to the right, where your population balance  
13 would be reasonably close and you have 14 people with  
14 maybe four different perspectives at the least, it's going  
15 to take a while.

16           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So how could you  
17 see -- since it appears during Plumas County you were the  
18 sole person to help are district the county, how do you  
19 see working with a group of 14 other individuals?

20           MR. ALLEN: I see it much in the way as my  
21 interaction with the Board of Supervisors with the  
22 difference that there I was working primarily to persuade  
23 them to stay within the laws. Whereas with the other  
24 Commissioners, it would be more of a joint responsibility  
25 to come up with proposals and not something that really

1 one person would be doing. But you would need to interact  
2 with the others, listen to what their ideas are, and be  
3 open to those. You never know who's going to have the  
4 good idea.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. During your  
6 redistricting efforts for Plumas County, there were many  
7 laws and regulations, I'm sure, that you had to follow.  
8 What were the most important laws you had to follow and  
9 why?

10 MR. ALLEN: Because of the nature of the  
11 population of the district, not much in the way of racial  
12 or ethnic diversity, for example, the real -- the critical  
13 one for the decisions was the California Elections Code  
14 with the provision for near equality in population, near  
15 as may be, and then those things that could be  
16 considerations in using that first one. And of course,  
17 the problem being there that one of the considerations the  
18 community of interest was, if not everyone's preference,  
19 was a preference I heard from most everyone I heard most  
20 everything from.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: How would you compare  
22 your experience with Plumas County to what the Commission  
23 is and their laws and regulation? Which laws and  
24 regulations do you feel would be the most important to the  
25 Commissioners for the state?

1           MR. ALLEN: The first one was the one that sets  
2 forth their task. If you don't stay within that, you're  
3 wasting your time. Then there are the various one the  
4 various federal provisions -- and I just completely  
5 blanked on the reference.

6           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Voting Rights Act?

7           MR. ALLEN: Excuse me?

8           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Voting Rights Act?

9           MR. ALLEN: That's at least part of it. I just  
10 drew a complete blank on it.

11           The various cases over the years that have  
12 addressed among other things the limits on how far you can  
13 vary from equal numbers and population.

14           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

15           I noticed there's many other applicants that have  
16 advanced degrees. Do you believe you will be advantaged  
17 or disadvantaged as a Commissioner and why and why not?

18           MR. ALLEN: Repeat that one.

19           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Many other applicants  
20 have advanced degrees and you have life experience. Do  
21 you believe that you will be advantaged or disadvantaged  
22 as a Commissioner? And why and why not?

23           MR. ALLEN: I think I could provide a different  
24 perspective that would be an advantage to the Commission.  
25 I've dealt in my work with people with equal or less



1 advanced education and it's gone well. As long as the  
2 people are willing to listen to someone who does not meet  
3 the standards to which they're accustomed to the people to  
4 whom they normally listen meeting, it works.

5 If you're in the situation where somebody -- and  
6 it's on either side of the issue -- tells you, you know,  
7 nothing -- you don't have the advanced degree or you don't  
8 have the experience, whichever side of that you want to be  
9 on, you're not going to progress very well.

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. I have one more  
11 question.

12 Do you feel that the diversity issues -- the  
13 state of California is huge. Are diversity issue similar  
14 and different between Plumas County and other counties  
15 with large are population? If so, can you please explain?

16 MR. ALLEN: The biggest difference in the  
17 diversity issues between a county like Plumas and the  
18 state as a whole is that Plumas is -- well, for the 2000  
19 census, 92 percent white. And the largest groups were the  
20 Native American and Hispanic. That's not like the state  
21 as a whole. The issues of diversity in the county were  
22 more along the lines of economic more along the lines of  
23 perspectives of people that are new to the county than  
24 those that have been there for a while.

25 There's a lot of -- and still is a lot of that's

1 not the way we do things where I came from. So why don't  
2 you do it the way we did it where I came from here? Whole  
3 different diversity issue from the ones normally discussed  
4 here.

5           So while you do get a certain limited part of the  
6 racial ethnic gender, age, diversity that you get  
7 throughout the rest of the state, it's not the same. You  
8 don't have these separate racial and ethnic community that  
9 makeup a very large part of your population.

10           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. That's all the  
11 questions I have.

12           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano, would you like  
13 to begin your 20 minutes?

14           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good morning.

15           When you encountered contentious disagreement  
16 with the Board in discussion with the map boundaries, how  
17 difficult was it for you to set aside your personal  
18 opinions that you may have had about a Board decision or  
19 suggestion or felt different about?

20           MR. ALLEN: It wasn't -- it really wasn't  
21 difficult at all, and I was surprised. Because I  
22 really -- it's a personal thing. I really focused on the  
23 goal of trying to get something that would meet the  
24 standards and accommodate what the community as a whole  
25 wanted as best as possible. And that was what I was

1   caring about. The other issues I just really was not  
2   paying any attention to.

3               PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Did you find it hard to  
4   convince the Board of the legal requirements?

5               MR. ALLEN: Not really. I did have to answer  
6   questions on that at every meeting. I think because they  
7   were hoping that in between meetings I would find  
8   something that could get them closer to what they wanted  
9   and if I keep asking the question, maybe he'll come up  
10  with something.

11              PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Did you have to push the  
12  Board to understand the -- did you have to convince the  
13  Board to understand the importance of communities of  
14  interest as they draw lines?

15              MR. ALLEN: No, I didn't have to convince them to  
16  understand that. I had to convince them that while that  
17  is a factor under the Elections Code, something for  
18  consideration, the primary requirement was the near  
19  equality in population and the considerations had to come  
20  subordinate to that as important as everybody considered  
21  it, there was no way to fully achieve community of  
22  interest and anything approaching near equality of  
23  population. Not when you have communities that run  
24  between 32 percent and 10 percent of the population of the  
25  county. It just doesn't work.

1           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. By the third time you  
2 drew the map in Plumas, the boundaries, did you have like  
3 a project plan that worked well for you? And how do you  
4 feel that you can apply those experiences to the  
5 Redistricting Commission?

6           MR. ALLEN: Actually, the project was planned out  
7 really starting before the 81 redistricting on seeing the  
8 boundaries for the census geography -- Census Bureau on  
9 its own likes to use major roads as boundaries. In that  
10 area, that means your boundary goes smack through the  
11 middle of your community. So in working with them with  
12 repeated attempts -- the first goal I had was to get  
13 boundaries that could be used for the county's data needs  
14 that were not flat earth boundaries. Use ridge lines as  
15 boundaries, as an example, which they do not automatically  
16 do, although they are legitimate boundaries, which is also  
17 nice because it puts our boundaries where were aren't any  
18 people and makes life easier.

19           After that, once we had those in place, which  
20 with really well had getting the designated places for the  
21 2000 census helped a lot, they changed the rules on that,  
22 made it a lot easier, I had a plan. But since I knew who  
23 is going to be doing the work, it wasn't a written plan.  
24 It was just I had a good picture of what needed to be  
25 done, what the result needed to be, and the areas in which

1 some sort of variation could be done to achieve something  
2 approximating the goal. Didn't have as good of an idea  
3 until the data came out, but I did some -- what turned out  
4 to be some pretty good population projections. So I had a  
5 fair idea of where the important areas, the areas of  
6 difficulty were going to be and the possible ways of  
7 solving those.

8           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So I'm getting an  
9 understanding that your role in the redistricting effort  
10 three times was really a role where you actually provided  
11 suggestions on how to draw the map and where they were  
12 according to the law based on the communities of  
13 interests. And as a Commissioner, you're going to be  
14 faced with making the decision to draw the lines. I was  
15 curious to know how comfortable you are doing that.

16           MR. ALLEN: Making decisions is always less  
17 comfortable than making recommendations. However, it's  
18 something I do have experience at, not as actually making  
19 the redistricting decisions, but in making other decisions  
20 that's where the time as zoning administrator has provided  
21 me with some good experience, because that included making  
22 decisions on for our county major subdivisions with many  
23 issues as the sole person responsible for the decision,  
24 which means you may have staff input, but you're not on  
25 some sort of Board or Committee where you have the luxury

1 of sounding people out and deciding to go with the  
2 majority or figuring I'll be the loan-hold out on this one  
3 so I can disclaim responsibility and say "I told you so"  
4 when things go wrong.

5           In that, you end up having to make a decision.  
6 You end up having to be ready in case it is appealed and  
7 most of the time they weren't. But they would be to the  
8 Board of Supervisors, to justify that to them. And it has  
9 to be a much better justification than it seemed willing a  
10 good idea. There would have to be good solid reasons for  
11 it. In the case of the appeal, you want them to be able  
12 to look at the decision and the reason for it and be able  
13 to come to the same determination.

14           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Sure. And in your zoning  
15 decisions, how would you go about doing that if you had to  
16 convince somebody that was challenging you on your  
17 decision on a certain zone plan that you came up with?  
18 Would you how would you defend that?

19           MR. ALLEN: In many ways was easy, because the  
20 county had for those decisions adopted in its general plan  
21 and related zoning and development standard requirements  
22 an organized set of requirements. The whole idea was that  
23 someone could come in, propose something, could be told  
24 what they needed to do, could then do it and get an  
25 approval. If they didn't do it, then it either needs to

1 be changed so it meets the standards or it's not going  
2 anywhere.

3           So the first part of it is there could be some  
4 staff person who would work on the project, someone  
5 knowledgeable enough compared to magnitude of the project  
6 to be able to deal with it who would review it in detail  
7 and deal with whatever environmental review that would  
8 prove necessary and prepare a recommendation. Then as the  
9 hearing officer, it would be necessary to review that  
10 recommendation, review the background material, listen to  
11 whatever anybody presents in the public hearing, read  
12 anything that's been submitted, look at all those in  
13 relation to what requirements are to apply to what someone  
14 is doing, see what fits, see where someone has pointed out  
15 something that is a problem, that doesn't meet the  
16 requirements, that can be corrected, that can be corrected  
17 with something that actually works and use that as the  
18 basis for the decision.

19           And if you need to justify the decision, have all  
20 that ready when the time comes so that the minutes would  
21 reflect all those considerations. And in some cases, it  
22 would be very simple because the recommendation would have  
23 everything in it. And that would become part of the  
24 minutes and it would all be covered there.

25           In other cases, it would be necessary to prepare

1 a separate written decision explaining at least those  
2 aspects that varied from the recommendation taking into  
3 account other things that had been brought up, which  
4 sometimes could take a while to put together.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Thank you.

6 As Commissioner, your work and your decision  
7 making will be heavily scrutinized by the public or the  
8 media or of a diverse group with varying community  
9 interests. Are you comfortable with that?

10 MR. ALLEN: Never completely, no. But I achieved  
11 a workable level of discomfort.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Did you find with  
13 each redistricting effort did the community issues change  
14 or did they remain the same?

15 MR. ALLEN: Did the communities change?

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The community issue, did  
17 they change or remain the same?

18 MR. ALLEN: They changed mostly in the number of  
19 people involved, which to some degree was reflected in the  
20 intensity of the issues.

21 There was one area that did not have any of the  
22 new second retirement home development within its  
23 boundaries, which remained a resource oriented community  
24 was not just stable in population, but declining adjacent  
25 to the only -- adjacent to the one of the two areas with



1 which its boundary could be adjusted that was more and  
2 more a second home retirement, affluent community where  
3 relations between the communities were not good. So that  
4 became each time a more intense issue and by where the  
5 population was the physical layout of the county there was  
6 no way for it to not be an issue.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How comfortable are you with  
8 dealing with conflict like that? You said it was a very  
9 intense issue. I'm curious to know how your consensus  
10 skills are and your collaborative work.

11 MR. ALLEN: It's never fully comfortable. It's  
12 one -- when I started, I found it terrifying. But I over  
13 the years, as I got to know the work better and got to  
14 know what I was doing better, whether it was the  
15 redistricting or any of the or issues. As I knew more and  
16 gained confidence, it became a lot easier. It never  
17 became completely comfortable.

18 In a situation such as this, if I were making a  
19 presentation to the Board of Supervisors on something  
20 controversial and I had a hostile crowd behind me, you  
21 don't feel comfortable.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Sure.

23 MR. ALLEN: Even if you don't expect anything to  
24 go back, you don't feel comfortable.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How do you handle that

1 situation?

2 MR. ALLEN: You just go ahead, you present what  
3 you know. You be honest. You never try to fib. Somebody  
4 will catch you. If somebody brings up something you  
5 missed, the best thing to do is say, "I missed that.  
6 We'll have to go back and look at it."

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You mentioned earlier that  
8 you understand Plumas has basically three -- is made up of  
9 three distinct ethnic racial groups. And you know as well  
10 as statewide it's going to be a different makeup with  
11 different communities of interests and different groups.  
12 How are you prepared to handle the difference that you see  
13 as you visit the state and listen to their concerns and  
14 gather their input?

15 MR. ALLEN: I'm not sure I caught all of that.  
16 How would I deal with the --

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How would you handle the  
18 other issues that are distinctly different than the issues  
19 and the concerns of the voters of Plumas County?

20 MR. ALLEN: The scope of diversity outside what  
21 I'm accustomed to dealing with?

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Exactly.

23 MR. ALLEN: Mainly by dealing with it as I would  
24 deal with any other new thing that came to me in my work,  
25 because there was always something new.

1           So you listen to people. You learn about it. If  
2 you can, you do some research. It's not like I've never  
3 been exposed to some components of that diversity, because  
4 I do get out of town occasionally. It's just that it's  
5 not a day-to-day occurrence.

6           Currently, I have family that I will visit from  
7 time to time in areas like Chico and the Bay Area. So I  
8 will encounter things at that time, although I know full  
9 well that visiting is not the same as living or something  
10 by a long shot.

11           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How comfortable are you in  
12 going and talking to community in a more densely populated  
13 area?

14           MR. ALLEN: I eventually got to where it was not  
15 too difficult to do, although those were the times I have  
16 to do that were more in conjunction with agency meetings  
17 where it would not be the public at large I was dealing  
18 with.

19           But I'll say with the Department of Finance and  
20 affiliate meetings, there would be representatives from  
21 counties and cities throughout the state with some  
22 representation of the diversity beyond what I was  
23 accustomed to dealing with and it worked well. It's --  
24 you just deal with the people. You deal with them as  
25 individuals. You listen to them. There's always

1 something new you can learn.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. How many more minutes  
3 do I have?

4 MS. HAMEL: A minute and a half.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: A minute and a half.

6 I'm not sure if I can get this question in. If I  
7 you have extra time I may have to ask it.

8 You mentioned earlier that in the first three months  
9 of the Commission's work you would suggest that may be they  
10 try to go and speak to communities and get some input from  
11 them. However, you were hesitant in saying that the only  
12 problem is you wouldn't have the value of having the  
13 census data available. How do you propose to handle that  
14 knowing that it would impact --

15 MR. ALLEN: There would still be value in that  
16 you could get an idea of the interests of the various  
17 communities, not directly data tied, but whatever other  
18 interests there may be. It's always more fun if you can  
19 argue with data that or discuss or whatever the case may  
20 be. But you can still get an understanding even if you're  
21 not ready to get into the data type issues.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Thank you.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I have a few questions,  
24 but certainly I'm willing to cede to your questions first.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't have any at this

1 point.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Go ahead and ask yours  
3 first.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. Thank you.

5 How important is it for the Commission to go out  
6 into communities and speak with the residents of those  
7 communities about their desires with regard to their own  
8 districts?

9 MR. ALLEN: I would consider that very important.  
10 In looking at the time frame involved and trying to  
11 calculate some possible schedules, I could see it's as  
12 very difficult to get enough of that done in the available  
13 time. You use -- what was it seven regions in the way you  
14 laid out the applicants statistics. Even if you're  
15 looking at one meeting in each one of those regions,  
16 you're looking at seven meetings. You could easily use  
17 up -- depending on how you scheduled them a month in just  
18 seven meetings with a day out and a day back for travel, a  
19 meeting day or two meeting days, and a month out of four  
20 and a half five and a half months means it is a lot of  
21 time and means you're likely to be able to only manage one  
22 set of those. If you're looking at some of those regions,  
23 you're talking some large territory where getting a large  
24 portion of the general public to such a meeting would be  
25 difficult. But I don't see a way in the available time to

1 say get one meeting per county. That just does not look  
2 like it would be feasible, even with really good  
3 scheduling.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So regional meetings,  
5 assuming that that's what the Commission decides to do, do  
6 you see or anticipate that the Commission will get  
7 valuable information with regard to some of the detailed  
8 communities that are involved if the Commission is  
9 traveling regionally?

10 MR. ALLEN: I see that as a possibility, but it  
11 would be heavily dependent on who would participate. And  
12 that would in part depend on where the meetings would be  
13 held. For example, it would be real easy to hold the  
14 north valley mountain meetings in Sacramento, since that  
15 as in that area. It is the most heavily populated portion  
16 of the area, but it is also quite a ways away from  
17 Redding, much less Alturas.

18 In some meeting in Sacramento, there could be  
19 valuable information garnered, because we know full well  
20 there are not going to be too many districts that are  
21 going to take up Weed, Redding, and Alturaz. Whereas,  
22 multiple district in the vicinity of Sacramento are a  
23 possibility. So there would be -- in locating and  
24 scheduling meetings and in the value of the information,  
25 there are things like that to take into consideration.

1           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So if you could be in  
2 charge of the Commission and plan its schedule in terms of  
3 where it traveled and where it held meetings, generally  
4 speaking, what would be your plan of attack?

5           MR. ALLEN: The pre-mapping meetings I think  
6 logistically would have to take place before the data  
7 become available, unless the Census Bureau breaks its  
8 pattern. They could do that. It would surprise me, but  
9 they could do that. So that would mean some time in the  
10 first three months.

11           In that time with other organizational things  
12 that would need to be done, I think there would be time  
13 for one set of regional meetings that some could be well  
14 scheduled. South Coast and Inland Empire, if you look at  
15 where the bulk of the population is in Inland Empire, you  
16 could actually schedule successive days without needing  
17 time for a travel day. If it could be more difficult to  
18 do that sort of thing with, say, north coast and the bay  
19 area, as an example.

20           Similarly, if there were to be meetings once the  
21 data is prepared -- available and it would be nice to be  
22 able to schedule at least one set once the data is  
23 available before maps are drawn to get input in relation  
24 to the data, and then have another set in relation to  
25 draft maps.

1           But in figuring four-and-a-half months for work  
2   once the data is available -- if I remembered the state  
3   holidays correctly, there are 93 working days in that.  
4   That's if you're looking at somewhere between two weeks  
5   and a month for a set of regional meetings, you're using  
6   up one to two months of that time just in that. It may be  
7   possible. I would anticipate it's likely that more than  
8   one draft would need to be done. It would be nice to be  
9   wrong on that, but I wouldn't count on it. And that if  
10   there were a second draft, it would be good to be able to  
11   take that to the regions as well rather than have it  
12   entirely in Sacramento. But if that means adding another  
13   month to the schedule, if we are looking at taking a month  
14   for each set of meetings, that's three out of  
15   four-and-a-half, five-and-a-half months. That's getting  
16   really difficult.

17           If meetings could be more efficiently scheduled  
18   than that and it could be possible, it might be practical,  
19   but still would be difficult. And that's not taking --  
20   that's assuming whatever staff would be available,  
21   whatever weekdays are necessary. It is not taking into  
22   account the lives of Commissioners and how much time they  
23   have available to that sort of work.

24           In the intensely, if it's very hands on, it could  
25   be essentially a full workweek plus for several months.



1 It depends on how hands on the Commissioners work will be  
2 and that would be dependent on how they want to set it up  
3 within the scope of the requirements for what they do it  
4 would seem to read like they should be very hands on. But  
5 I could be alone in that perspective for all I know.

6           What the level of staff support would be, if it's  
7 one thing to be in a meeting with maps proposing lines and  
8 drawing them. It's another thing to instruct somebody  
9 come back to me with maps that reflect these things. And  
10 then having them work really hard to get those done in  
11 time for the next meeting. Somebody else is putting in  
12 the long hours and then you get to put in the long  
13 meeting, reviewing what they did to reflect what you told  
14 them to do. It's a whole -- they're two very different  
15 ways of doing things. I don't know how the Commission is  
16 going to work.

17           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What would be your  
18 preference?

19           MR. ALLEN: From reading what was passed, it  
20 looks like the Commission needs to be pretty much hands-on  
21 to meet the requirements for what it does, not telling the  
22 staff, "Come back to me with something and we'll kick it  
23 around when you hand it to us."

24           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I guess one of my concerns  
25 at the notion of regional meetings is that holding a

1 meeting in say the south coastal area, even if you did  
2 three, I wonder the extent to which you're going to get  
3 poor and disenfranchised people to come to those meetings  
4 or whether it's more important to go to them. And so I'm  
5 wondering if the Commission decided it wanted to do 90 or  
6 100 days of travel in a row to hit as many different  
7 churches and local community centers as possible and go  
8 into the heart of south central and places that are  
9 intimidating whether you're prepared to do that.

10 MR. ALLEN: Yeah. I don't think they will have  
11 to time to do that, but yeah. At least not to the extent  
12 that I thought I heard you describing.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How much redistricting is  
14 intuitive?

15 MR. ALLEN: It depends on the person and how well  
16 they know what they're looking at.

17 In a way, I can say that by the third time around  
18 for me for Plumas County, somebody watching me would think  
19 that what I was doing was intuitive by virtue of knowing  
20 the county, knowing where all the special district  
21 boundaries which are important to the elections office --  
22 so they're of importance to the supervisorial  
23 redistricting. You don't want to create too many  
24 precincts and make the elections office angry with you.  
25 And it would look with the amount of knowledge I had by

1 that time like the work being done were intuitive.

2 I'm not a real intuitive person. So in my case,  
3 it was not so much a use of intuitive as having the  
4 knowledge and being able to quickly wheeled it rather than  
5 to have the uh-huh insight. It was figuring it out, but  
6 figuring it out fast.

7 I can see where other people with some experience  
8 with the type of information they have to use even with --  
9 not even if not the specifics of that type of information  
10 can have a much more intuitive grasp and seize on things  
11 without having to think it through, no matter how fast the  
12 thinking it through might be. It's very much an aspect of  
13 diversity.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Panelists, do you have  
15 follow-up questions?

16 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't.

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You asked the question  
18 I was going to ask.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: A few questions. You  
20 mentioned that redistricting was your favorite project.  
21 Can you tell me why?

22 MR. ALLEN: It was a challenge. Looking at a  
23 whole bunch of information, there were things in that type  
24 of redistricting like I say with the special districts  
25 that you would not be looking at on statewide basis. But

1 whatever you draw the supervisorial boundary if it goes  
2 through a special district, you split that special  
3 district in two voting precincts with two ballot types,  
4 which the elections office would much prefer to not have  
5 if at all possible.

6 We have 40-odd special districts in the county  
7 and their boundaries will wind around each other in very  
8 complex ways. That actually made sense to the people  
9 setting them up at the time.

10 And you need to be able to keep all that in mind  
11 while looking at your goal and the ways to get there to  
12 ways to satisfy the needs, it's just challenging and  
13 interesting undertaking and one that is important.

14 There are other things that I found intriguing to  
15 have to do such to say that housing element work, but it  
16 did not have the -- it had comparable challenges, but it  
17 just was not as overall as important.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Let's see. I was wondering  
19 if you can describe briefly your work for a ranger for the  
20 four poling places in Plumas County and tell us why you  
21 were interested in becoming a ranger

22 MR. ALLEN: What did a ranger do and why did I  
23 become one?

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

25 MR. ALLEN: It started out after the 2000

1 election when counties were acquiring new more complex  
2 voting equipment, and in our case, needed someone at each  
3 poling place to be able to deal with the equipment and  
4 whatever might go wrong with it and to maintain the  
5 security of the equipment. So that was the start of it.

6           And then while doing that, it evolved into  
7 essentially someone providing overall direction and  
8 control of the poling place. The poling places now have  
9 several precincts, whereas before, they did not with the  
10 cost of purchasing new equipment. Poling places -- and  
11 also with requirements for accessibility for poling  
12 places. A lot of the old poling places could not be used  
13 any longer and not enough equipment could be purchased to  
14 equip all the old poling places, so they were grouped into  
15 four following places, one in each of the four largest  
16 communities in the county.

17           And it became quickly the response of the pole  
18 workers if they had to deal with somebody they did not  
19 know how to handle or preferred not to, they would go to  
20 the ranger to take care of it. And then whoever that  
21 would be would either deal with it or call the elections  
22 office and sometimes it would take both in that you would  
23 have the solution to whatever the problem was. But you  
24 would also call the elections office, because that would  
25 give whoever had the problem the confidence that not only

1 had you found a solution for it, but that you had checked  
2 and made sure it was the right solution.

3 I got involved because when that first came up I  
4 was asked. I worked closely with our elections office  
5 over the years and various things such as devising a new  
6 precinct system to make sure everybody got the right  
7 ballot type. Decades in some cases to get the right  
8 ballot type at a right polling up you show up at the polling  
9 place and they'd ask you where you live and gave you a  
10 ballot type based on that. If it was near a boundary,  
11 they would have maps and they could ask you do you live  
12 before or after this person's house in order to determine  
13 where you were.

14 You get -- with the second home retirement  
15 influx, there were too many people -- the number of voters  
16 proportionate to the permanent population changed. Some  
17 communities had more voters than they have permanent  
18 population. Too many people to do it that way anymore.

19 So we had to come up with something new. So I  
20 worked with the elections office and then data processing  
21 department to come up with a system where the ballot type  
22 for each person could be identified on the voter roster.  
23 And then we had to maintain that and do it with everybody  
24 who registered, when they registered so there would be no  
25 problem.

1           And I was quite accustomed to working with the  
2 elections office and they with me. So when they needed  
3 someone for the ranger duties at a polling place, I was one  
4 of the people they asked.

5           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Thank you. I have no  
6 further questions.

7           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Any other questions?

8           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No questions.

9           CHAIR AHMADI: I don't.

10          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Do you care to make a  
11 closing statement? We have about eight minutes.

12          MR. ALLEN: I don't know if I have one. But  
13 they're usually the part where you get warm and fuzzy, and  
14 I don't do warm and fuzzy very well. Sort of like  
15 intuition, it's just not one of those things I have.

16          But it's just that I think I can bring some  
17 skills I could bring to this. When I saw the ballot  
18 measure before it was voted on, that was when I decided  
19 that I was going to apply. And when it passed, I just  
20 kept my eye on that after waiting for the opportunity to  
21 come up.

22          I've got a set of skills, as I said, I think  
23 could prove useful to the Commission, but you've got  
24 plenty of people to choose from, a wide range of  
25 backgrounds. If I'm not one who makes it past this stage,

1 that will be fine. I've made my offer. And you get to  
2 decide if it's one of the better ones or not.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you so much for  
4 coming to see us, Mr. Allen. Let's go into recess until  
5 10:59.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

8 (Whereupon there was a recess)

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1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. Back on record.

2 We have with us -- well, first, I received a  
3 telephone message over the break indicating that  
4 tomorrow's 11:00 o'clock interview has requested to  
5 withdraw from the pool. So we will not have an 11:00  
6 interview tomorrow, Tuesday, August 10th. And the panel  
7 may take action on that item at your next meeting, because  
8 it's not agendized to approve any withdraws or other  
9 applicant action for this meeting.

10 Moving right along, we have with us Dr. Melissa  
11 Michelson, who I understand is ready to begin her  
12 interview.

13 DR. MICHELSON: Ready.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: The first question: What  
15 specific skills do you believe a good Commissioner should  
16 possess? Of those skills, which do you possess? Which do  
17 you not possess and how will you compensate for it? Is  
18 there anything in your life that would prohibit or impair  
19 your ability to perform all of the duties of a  
20 Commissioner?

21 DR. MICHELSON: To kind of summarize, I think  
22 there is two sets of skills a Commissioner is going to  
23 need to have. One is the ability to do the work skills.  
24 Can you work with the data? Can you interact with the  
25 mapping software so just kind of the hands-on work of it?

1           And then a second set I think is the going to the  
2 public meetings, interacting with the other Commissioners  
3 and kind of the interpersonal skills. And I think I  
4 actually have a pretty good set of competencies on both.  
5 I have a lot of statistical training. I've been working  
6 on the initiative data for almost five years now and that  
7 involves a lot of statistical data and a lot of  
8 qualitative data.

9           I also think I have very good interpersonal  
10 skills. I've worked in a variety groups and with a  
11 variety of different kinds of people. I think I'm pretty  
12 good at that as well.

13           I think one area I need more training is using  
14 the GIS software. Although we did use that to some extent  
15 in the California Vote Initiative to make walking maps, we  
16 weren't drawing maps. We weren't drawing districts and  
17 dividing people up in the way that is going to be needed  
18 for this work. And I know from a presentation I attended  
19 earlier this year that there is some pretty user-friendly  
20 software out there, the ARC GIS software that was used in  
21 Ohio. If I was chosen for Commission, I'd have to bone up  
22 on that sort of thing.

23           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance  
24 from your personal experience where you had to work with  
25 others to resolve a conflict or difference of opinion.

1 Please describe the issue and explain your role in  
2 addressing and resolving the conflict. If you were  
3 selected to serve on the Citizen Redistricting Commission,  
4 tell us how you would resolve conflicts that may arise  
5 among the Commissioners.

6 DR. MICHELSON: I want to answer the second part  
7 of the question first, because I think answer is it  
8 depends. I don't know who the other Commissioners are.  
9 And so if I'm selected, the way in which we will all  
10 interact and the way in which we'll solve our differences  
11 I think is going to depend on the personalities involved.

12 I have definitely experienced quite a few  
13 conflicts and differences of opinion over my career. As  
14 you can imagine with the California Votes Initiative, this  
15 involved dozens of people and a lot of kind of  
16 high-powered people and strong personalities. So some  
17 conflicts did arise.

18 One that I was thinking of when I was reviewing  
19 this question is something that came up in 2008 when we  
20 sent a team of two dozen undergraduate and graduate  
21 students out to observe the community organization doing  
22 their work. And their job was to observe and take notes.

23 But one day I got a call from a student saying  
24 they were being asked to do the work of the organization.  
25 They were being treated as extra staff, and they were very

1 uncomfortable with this and were being told by the  
2 organization you have to do that. How can you understand  
3 what we do if you don't help. All the other student  
4 observers haven't had a problem.

5           And unfortunately what happened next -- I made,  
6 in retrospect, a poor decision, which was to tell my field  
7 coordinator, who was the graduate student I had put in  
8 charge of the two dozen students, to take care of it. I  
9 thought I gave him clear instructions.

10           But he wrote an e-mail not only to the head of  
11 the organization, the head of the canvassing to the  
12 organization, but also to the president of the  
13 organization. And I don't want to get too specific, but  
14 this is somebody pretty important who really, number one,  
15 shouldn't be bothered with those sorts of e-mail and the  
16 tone of the e-mail was completely inappropriate for this  
17 graduate student to be criticizing the president of this  
18 major community organization.

19           And, well, next thing you know, everyone is  
20 annoyed. The community organization has complained to the  
21 James Irvine Foundation. James Irvine program officer is  
22 called me. The field coordinator, the students are  
23 calling me. The canvassing head for the organization is  
24 calling me. And everyone was very upset. And so I spent  
25 pretty much the next two days on the phone explaining what

1 had happened, trying to mend the fences, trying to  
2 apologize appropriately and criticize appropriately. And  
3 we moved the student around and changed their assignments.

4           And I think we were okay after that. But we  
5 really got some people pretty mad. And it was my fault,  
6 because I delegated responsibility which was then misused.  
7 But I think in the end it was okay. And we continued to  
8 work with that organization through the rest of the  
9 initiative and there didn't seem to be any hard feeling.  
10 So I'm pretty happy with how it all worked out.

11           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
12 work impact the state? Which of these impacts will  
13 improve the state the most? Is there any potential for  
14 the Commissions work to harm the state? And if so, in  
15 what ways?

16           DR. MICHELSON: If the redistricting is done  
17 right, I think this could have a transformative effect on  
18 California. I've been teaching about California politics  
19 for over a decade, and over and over again we come back to  
20 the problem of how the districts are gerrymandered. How  
21 they are drawn as to be safe for the incumbents and that  
22 reduces accountability and creates gridlock in Sacramento.

23           So ideally if we draw the districts well, then we  
24 will reverse those trends. We will see more competitive  
25 districts. We will see more accountability to the people

1 of California. We will see less gridlock and more budgets  
2 passed on time and more laws passed that are passed  
3 instead of blocked and fought over on partisan grounds.

4 I don't want to be too idealistic about it,  
5 because I think there is a lot of other pressures on what  
6 happens in Sacramento. There is a lot of other factors  
7 that come into whether or not races are competitive and  
8 whether or not members of the state government are  
9 accountable. And so it could have a very powerful effect  
10 and it could be that those effect are mitigated by these  
11 other forces.

12 And it's also possible that the Commission's work  
13 will not be done well, that people will see the process as  
14 a illegitimate or the results as illegitimate and that  
15 will be manipulated by other political campaigns or  
16 political actors to attack the systems and the lines and  
17 will make people more cynical.

18 I'm hoping that's not what happened, and I'm  
19 hoping the Commission, whoever it's made up of, does a job  
20 that is seen as appropriate and well thought out and that  
21 increases trusted and turnout and increases trust and  
22 accountable and all those wonderful things that could  
23 happen. But I think it's really an open question the  
24 degree to which the impact will be positive and the degree  
25 of impact it will have.

1 I try to be optimistic but realistic.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where  
3 you have had to work as part of a group to achieve a  
4 common goal. Tell us about the goal, describe your role  
5 within the group, and tell us how the group worked or did  
6 not work collaboratively to achieve this goal.

7 If you are selected to serve on the Citizen's  
8 Redistricting Commission, tell us what you would do to  
9 foster collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure  
10 that the Commission meets its legal deadlines.

11 DR. MICHELSON: So again, this makes me think of  
12 the Initiative, because this is pretty much what's been  
13 taking over my life for the past four years. And the  
14 overall goal of the Initiative itself was to come up with  
15 a series of white papers that were released by the James  
16 Irvine Foundation that were shared with the community so  
17 that other community organization in addition to the ten  
18 that we worked with could use them to help increase  
19 turnout and make the electoral of California more  
20 representative of the population of California. And so  
21 this was a very diverse group.

22 It was the ten community organizations, some of  
23 which have been doing voter mobilization for over three  
24 decades. It was my academic team which included several  
25 other faculty members at other university and then also my

1 team of two dozen students, the people changed, but it was  
2 about two dozen at a time. And then also the people that  
3 I had to interact with at my university, the California  
4 State University East Bay foundation which handled the  
5 accounting and handled -- had to approve or disapprove how  
6 I wanted to spend the grant money. And so it was a lot of  
7 people to coordinate. And although technically I was in  
8 charge, it was immediately apparent that I wasn't really  
9 in charge. I mean, I can't just tell these people what to  
10 do. It would have been inappropriate for me to just tell  
11 people what to do. It was more of a team effort, even  
12 though at the end of the day kind of the buck stops here  
13 and I was responsible if things went wrong or we messed  
14 deadlines.

15           And I think there were some initial missteps  
16 where, for example, the academics on the team, myself, and  
17 the other professors were using language that didn't mesh  
18 with the language that we used by the community  
19 organizations. And so we were speaking to each other, but  
20 we weren't speaking to each other. And there was some  
21 misunderstanding so we had to learn to understand each  
22 other and be very clear and to explain what we were doing  
23 and what we wanted.

24           I think the initial problem was the James Irvine  
25 Foundation which was funding those organizations was



1 funding us to come in and watch them and write a report.  
2 And to the organizations that sounded like, oh, you know  
3 you're going to grade us. You're going to tell the James  
4 Irvine Foundation whether we're doing a good job or bad  
5 job. So we are skeptical of your willingness to help us.  
6 We think you're here to judge us. And that really wasn't  
7 what the Initiative was about. It was about to how better  
8 get out the vote and to figure out what were the best  
9 methods of doing that. So there was a lot of initial  
10 skepticism and distrust we had to get over.

11 I think in the end what made it all work and it  
12 really in looking back now it's amazing what we  
13 accomplished. It was a lot about having everything  
14 written out. We had a lot of memos. We had a lot of time  
15 lines. We had a lot of conversations. And about taking  
16 the time to make sure everybody understood what had to be  
17 done, what data needs to be done. Why are we sending this  
18 student into your office to watch us. What is it we need  
19 you to tell us about what you're doing, what can we do to  
20 help you.

21 And so after the first round for the June 2006  
22 election, we had a lot more paperwork that was passed  
23 around, a lot more meetings, face to face meetings. And I  
24 think in the end the white papers are an enormous success.

25 And I think some of those lessons can be moved

1 over to help with the Commission if I'm selected for the  
2 Commission that we have to start out by putting out a time  
3 line and figuring out, okay, in order to meet our goal  
4 what are the intermediary timelines the intermediary  
5 deadlines that we need to meet. What is it that everybody  
6 is going to do and waht are all the things we're going to  
7 have do? And what do we mean by all the words we just  
8 wrote on the memo and ensure everyone is clear.

9 I've had various interactions with co-authors,  
10 with students, with community organizations. And I think  
11 it really all comes down to communicating and not making  
12 assumptions about, well, they must know what that means or  
13 I'm sure they know that. That nothing should be assumed  
14 it should be all be written down and explained. And if  
15 nothing else, put in an appendix just so everybody knows  
16 what everybody is talking about and what's expected of  
17 everybody. So that, for example, if a student is called  
18 upon to do the voter mobilization work instead of just  
19 take field notes we did send that you memo. And if you  
20 look back at this memo, it says the students are only  
21 supposed to observe. But to write everything down.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
23 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
24 from all over California who come from very different  
25 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you were

1 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
2 Commission, tell us about the specific skills you possess  
3 that will make you effective in interacting with the  
4 public.

5 DR. MICHELSON: I think I'm a good listener. I  
6 think I'm good at seeing other people's side of an  
7 argument or of a story. And I mean, I think that's the  
8 result of my years of experience as a scholar. I've  
9 taught in both the fairly conservative Fresno area and  
10 also the Bay Area. I've traveled around the state for the  
11 California Votes Initiative doing press conferences and  
12 meeting with organizations. And I think I'm -- it's hard  
13 for me to keep saying I'm so good at those things, because  
14 at the same time, maybe I shouldn't say I'm so good.  
15 Maybe I've got been false self perception and really we  
16 should find out what other people think. I think I'm  
17 pretty good at these things, but maybe you should ask  
18 someone else.

19 But I think I'm good at it. I think that's a to  
20 be a commentator to serve election night analyst live on  
21 television, because they know that I can do the job and  
22 that I'll remain impartial and I can think on my feet and  
23 that I'm not going to be biased.

24 I think it's revealed in the comments from  
25 students that I get both on my teaching evaluations and on

1 some of those fun web sites like Rate My Professors where  
2 some of them are convinced I'm a Republican conservative  
3 and some think I'm liberal. I'm so glad they have no  
4 idea, because I feel like it's my role in class to  
5 challenge them and to make them think and defend their own  
6 opinions. And if they are going to then assume I'm  
7 something I'm not, that's okay with me. But I think I'm  
8 good at listening, at seeing the other side of things, and  
9 I've had so much exposures to different sorts of people I  
10 feel like I would bring that respect for others into the  
11 work.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: That concludes our general  
13 questions segment.

14 Mr. Ahmadi, would you like to begin your 20  
15 minutes of questioning?

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure. Thank you.

17 Good morning, Dr. Michelson.

18 DR. MICHELSON: Good morning.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Did I pronounce it  
20 correctly?

21 DR. MICHELSON: Yeah.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Going back to your last  
23 response, you mentioned something about interaction with  
24 the media. What values or value do you think that  
25 experience will bring to the Commission should you be

1 selected?

2 DR. MICHELSON: I think there is a couple things  
3 that brings. One is that I'm comfortable being in the  
4 public eye. I remember once a television anchor said to  
5 me before we want you realize that X many people watch  
6 this show. And I guess I hadn't really thought about it.  
7 But it didn't mess me up. Some people freeze up when they  
8 know a lot of people are watching them, and I'm  
9 comfortable with that.

10 If you're going to have a lot of public meetings  
11 and going to be videotaped for everyone to see, you have  
12 to be able to act as if there isn't a camera watching or  
13 you or there isn't a roomful of people watching you.

14 Another thing it has taught me or helped me work  
15 on is this ability to think on my feet and to react. Once  
16 I went into a television station in Fresno and I told the  
17 anchor before I went on air, you know, I really am not up  
18 on the local propositions, so I'd prefer we don't talk  
19 about them. First thing he asked is what do you think is  
20 going to happen with Prop C? And inside I was thinking,  
21 hey, I just asked you to please not ask me about the local  
22 propositions. And yet we're live, so I can't slug him. I  
23 have to just answer the question.

24 And so I think that that's helped me work on just  
25 staying calm and answering things. Although it's very

1 similar to being in a classroom that you have to be able  
2 to think on your feet and answer questions.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: So how did you answer that  
4 question? You don't have to give me the answer. How  
5 comfortable were --

6 DR. MICHELSON: I think I was okay. I knew what  
7 it was. It was a proposition about air quality. And, of  
8 course, in the central valley, there is concern about air  
9 quality and asthma and the health of the children. I said  
10 something general about how people in the central valley  
11 were very concerned so maybe they would approve it.

12 And finally I think speaking to the media just  
13 kind of reinforces something I've always been working on  
14 in my career, which is making sure I'm impartial and that  
15 I am analyzing the evidence. You know, if I'm asked about  
16 something that one of the candidates said here's this  
17 major news story of the day, I can react to it in an  
18 objective way or am I going to reveal -- of course I have  
19 my own opinions. Can I answer it in a way that isn't  
20 bringing in my own opinions.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you.

22 You mention about your career, and I was  
23 impressed when I read about your activities on the  
24 application. Would you mind telling us more about what  
25 you mean by minority politics?

1           DR. MICHELSON: So most of my scholarships for  
2 the past 15 years has centered on Latino politics. So  
3 talking about how do Latinos in the United States form  
4 their political opinions. How do these political opinions  
5 affect their political behavior. For example, if you're  
6 born in the United States, you usually become what your  
7 parents are. You become a Democrat or Republican based on  
8 what your parents are. What if you are an immigrant, how  
9 do you decide whether to be Republican or Democrat? How  
10 do you become politically socialized? An adult who comes  
11 to this country as opposed to a child growing up in this  
12 country and going to school in the United States. So I've  
13 done a lot of my research on that.

14           And then I have in recent years being broadening  
15 that, looking at African American politics, Asian politics  
16 and just mind of minority politics more generally. So  
17 both attitude formation and then political behavior and  
18 how that differs from the majority white population.

19           CHAIR AHMADI: Very well.

20           DR. MICHELSON: I can go on about that for a long  
21 time.

22           CHAIR AHMADI: Well, we have limited time.  
23 I would have loved to let you go on.

24           DR. MICHELSON: Leave it at that.

25           CHAIR AHMADI: So you conducted

1 experiments to increase voter turnout in central valley  
2 Bay Area and southern California, I believe.

3 DR. MICHELSON: Uh-huh.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Why those areas?

5 DR. MICHELSON: Oh, well, mostly because the  
6 James Irvine Foundation says those were the areas we were  
7 going to focus on. Before the Initiative actually got off  
8 the ground, me and the two other academics that I chose  
9 for my team met with the funders and talked about  
10 expanding the areas, and we convinced them to add Orange  
11 County so that there would be more Asian Americans in the  
12 sets of experiments.

13 But from the outset, they were interested in  
14 southern California, the Inland Empire and the Central  
15 Valley. So that was their decision.

16 And then I've done other experiments in the Bay  
17 Area, because I'm in the Bay Area or in Fresno when I was  
18 in Fresno. So the non-California Votes Initiative  
19 experiments I've done have been base on where I am at the  
20 time.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. So do you think you  
22 can project what's learned from that study to the entire  
23 state or parts of the state in terms of similarities or  
24 differences?

25 DR. MICHELSON: I think so, because even though



1 we were limited in our geographic scope, we really hit  
2 quite a bit of California. When I say that we were doing  
3 experiments in the central valley, we were doing things  
4 all the way up in Colusa County through Sacramento and all  
5 the way down to Tulare and Kern County. So we're hitting  
6 the whole middle of the state and Los Angeles County,  
7 Bakersfield, San Bernardino, Riverside Orange County. So  
8 we're hitting -- except for the Bay Area, pretty much all  
9 the big population centers.

10           And the other reason I'm pretty confident that it  
11 extrapolates is because regardless of we are where, the  
12 results were pretty much the same.

13           So, for example, if we did an experiment with  
14 Asian American in Orange County and Latinos in the city of  
15 Los Angeles, it pretty much as was the same tactic, had  
16 the same effect. And so I think because the results  
17 across those 300 experiments were so consistent across  
18 different populations and across different geographic  
19 areas, it really speaks to their generalized ability so  
20 that even if you went to the Bay Area or Eureka that  
21 probably it would be the same.

22           And that same thing -- just to sum up, because  
23 I'm really excited about the results is all about talking  
24 to people. If you talk to people face to face or in a  
25 live telephone conversations, you are very likely to be

1 able to convince them to vote. It's all about that  
2 personal invitation. And I think that's a universal human  
3 quality that we like being invited personally. We like  
4 being made to feel important. So if somebody asks you  
5 personally to do something, it's going to have an effect  
6 no matter who you are.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure. Okay. Thank you.

8 So let me read the next question. I have some  
9 notes jotted down here. So I have to go to my notes. In  
10 what ways, if any, work to document and improve Latino  
11 representation would effect your decision on the  
12 Commission should you be selected?

13 DR. MICHELSON: I think there is definitely a  
14 relationship between how lines are drawn and the degree to  
15 which people of color are able to make meaningful choices  
16 at the ballot box. And, so for example, you know based on  
17 gerrymandering, you can either help Latinos and other  
18 minorities be given the ability to choose for somebody  
19 that they prefer or you can dilute their votes. And I  
20 think it's important to make sure that groups can make  
21 meaningful choices, that they don't just have the illusion  
22 of choice, but they have the ability to make a meaningful  
23 choice. And so that doesn't mean that Latinos have to be  
24 able to elect Latinos and it doesn't mean that blacks have  
25 to be able to elect black, but they have to be able to

1 elect somebody that they feel understand and respect their  
2 community.

3           And I think sometimes the way lines are drawn,  
4 that doesn't happen. I would like to see lines drawn that  
5 give more people in California a meaningful choice. Might  
6 be impossible to give everybody a meaningful choice. If  
7 you are a conservative Republican living in San Francisco,  
8 you're probably outnumbered and there is little we can do  
9 with line drawing to help you be able to vote for a  
10 conservative Republican and win.

11           But to a certain degree I think where there are  
12 real community and real cohesive groups whether they're by  
13 ethnicity or race or partisanship, I think that you should  
14 at least try to draw the lines as to make sure that people  
15 feel like they have a real choice and that it's hopeless.  
16 But it's limited. You can't give -- unless we switch to  
17 proportional representation or something, we can only get  
18 so close.

19           CHAIR AHMADI: So let's say that you're on  
20 the Commission. Should you be selected, and you're  
21 meeting with a group of conservative Republicans in the  
22 Bay Area, they're not happy about the lines that are drawn  
23 or proposed to be approved, how would you handle that?

24           DR. MICHELSON: Well, I think I would try to  
25 empathize with them and say, I understand how it can be

1 difficult to live in an area where you just feel like none  
2 of the elected officials are listening to you. Try to  
3 make them feel like, you know, here's the numbers.

4           I don't think you can make everybody happy  
5 though. And I think if you just say to them I welcome  
6 your ideas. If you have an idea of how we can draw lines  
7 that are fair that would give your group a meaningful  
8 voice, we want to hear your ideas. But these are the  
9 numbers that we have. And we can't magically create more  
10 conservative Republicans for you.

11           So I think making them feel like we understand  
12 how it feels to be outnumbered, to lose every election, to  
13 invite them to submit your own idea to us. And if you  
14 have an idea of how we can help your group, your community  
15 have a meaningful voice, we would welcome your help  
16 because it's an enormous task. And the more people we  
17 have drawing lines and putting out ideas, probably the  
18 better.

19           But I think a lot of it would be about making  
20 sure that they felt heard, that we appreciated your  
21 predicament. But sharing with them, look, here's the  
22 demographics of San Francisco and, you know, we can't draw  
23 a skinny line that travels the throughout the state just  
24 so that you can elect a Republican. That wouldn't be fair  
25 and it's not a real community. They'd probably still

1 leave annoyed but hopefully not as annoyed.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: I have two follow-up  
3 questions in regards to what you just said.

4 One is about when you're working on the  
5 Commission, part of the Commission's work is to gather  
6 information. And you mentioned data. But other than raw  
7 data or data by the census, what other information or  
8 factors would you consider as part of your decision making  
9 on the redistricted Commission, number one?

10 And number two, what other factors unite people  
11 other than party affiliation? Can you elaborate on that,  
12 please?

13 DR. MICHELSON: Yeah. I think census data is  
14 actually very limited. There's communities that exist  
15 that are not going to be picked up by census takers or by  
16 statistical data. You need to talk to people in community  
17 to find out where they think their neighborhood is and  
18 what do they think their community consists of. I don't  
19 think everyone would give the same answer.

20 But just thinking about my own experience, for  
21 example I live in Palo Alto and there are different  
22 communities in Palo Alto. If you ask people, most of them  
23 know I live in Green Meadow or I live in the Circles. I  
24 live in the Professorville or whatever it's called. And  
25 those are technically communities and there are

1 technically lines that border those communities. But I  
2 don't think everybody's sense of their community matches  
3 up with those lines.

4           And your community might better be defined as  
5 where you socialize or where you like to go and hang out  
6 or where you work and the people that you interact with on  
7 a day to day basis. So I think it would be important to  
8 talk to people and find out how do you define your  
9 community. How did you define your neighborhood and who  
10 do you think shares your political interests and your  
11 desires.

12           And I think there is a lot of ways in which  
13 people group up politically. I think partisan -- I know  
14 that partisan identification is the strongest. And on the  
15 other hand, there are many other things that influences  
16 how people vote and how they think about politics.  
17 There's race and ethnicity. There's gender and income and  
18 education. There's just a feeling I know this gets thrown  
19 around there is a feeling of whether you like somebody.  
20 There's all kinds of things that are going to lean you  
21 towards one community or the other or one voting decision  
22 or the other. And it's way beyond party. But party is  
23 the most important factor.

24           CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you.

25           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Five minutes.

1           CHAIR AHMADI: Do you think the  
2 Commission's decision where to start drawing or redrawing  
3 the lines would substantially impact the final maps and  
4 why?

5           DR. MICHELSON: Isn't that our job to draw the  
6 maps?

7           CHAIR AHMADI: Do you think the  
Commission  
8 decision where to start redrawing the lines substantially  
9 impact the final maps and why? Or why or why not?

10          DR. MICHELSON: Yeah, I think they would, because  
11 it's kind of like when you are writing an essay, you write  
12 a rough draft and having read an amazing number of student  
13 essays over the years usually the final drafts are very  
14 much like the rough drafts. And it's difficult to take a  
15 document and completely reorganize it and kind of start  
16 from scratch. So in a way, what you do with the rough  
17 draft determines the final document unless somebody new  
18 comes along and helps you. And so I think it would be  
19 important where the lines started and it would be  
20 something we'd have to keep in mind that we weren't biased  
21 by our first attempts or by our starting point. Because  
22 it's hard to start from scratch and it's easier to edit  
23 than to create. So there would be a tendency to be  
24 influenced by the starting point.

25          CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. No more

1 questions.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Hello, Ms. Michelson.

4 DR. MICHELSON: Hi.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I wanted to gain a  
6 little bit of clarification on some of the questions that  
7 Nasir asked you. You were saying in the sense of cohesive  
8 groups and keeping them together on in -- of the districts  
9 and communities of interest, do you think there is other  
10 factors than just race that you would have to look at when  
11 you look at these communities of interest and what would  
12 those be?

13 DR. MICHELSON: Yeah. Absolutely. I think  
14 there's race and ethnicity. There's income. There's is  
15 it near university and then there is a split between the  
16 people who are townees and the people who are part of the  
17 campus community. Are there different sorts of  
18 occupational difference. So, for example, in a more  
19 agricultural area maybe you'd have to think about who were  
20 the owners of the farms and the agriculture businesses and  
21 who were the people who worked in the fields.

22 I mean, people are made up of a whole lot of  
23 different characteristics that are important to them and  
24 impact their political opinions and choices. So it would  
25 be important to find out in the communities what those



1 divisions were. I think it would depend on each community  
2 what's important here and what divides and groups people  
3 in this area of California. And it wouldn't always be  
4 race or ethnicity. It could be many things.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. Now, if you  
6 were selected as a Commissioner, what would be your first  
7 item of business?

8 DR. MICHELSON: Well, I think the first thing to  
9 do would be to get to know the other 13 people, because if  
10 we are going to work together intensely for eight or  
11 nine months, which is what it sounds like what would  
12 happen, we'd want to start with a base of knowing each  
13 other and feeling comfortable with each other.

14 So I think the first thing I would do is try to  
15 get us all together for pot luck or something. Just  
16 because then you have something to start in and you  
17 understand each other. You know about each other a little  
18 bit more. And then when the inevitable conflicts and  
19 differences of opinion come up, you know each other as a  
20 person and you're not -- you're more likely to give them  
21 the benefit of the doubt.

22 I was thinking about the old stories about how  
23 politicians would fight on the floor of the Capitol and  
24 then go out for a beer together. So even though during  
25 the day they're at each other's heels fighting over policy

1 differences, in the end they were colleagues and friends.

2 I don't know that that happens anymore. But I  
3 think that's one of the problems with policy making today.  
4 So that if everyone appreciates and respects each other as  
5 a human being first you can move forward to working  
6 together and not always agreeing with each other. So  
7 yeah, my first item of business would be a social  
8 gathering.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Now, after you  
10 understand each other and you understand how each of you  
11 work and what the strengths and weaknesses of each of the  
12 Commissioners, would you -- what kind of plan would you  
13 put in place to make sure that this deadline of September  
14 15th is met? And what would those first items of business  
15 that you would want to discuss?

16 DR. MICHELSON: I think we'd want to come up with  
17 a time line, definitely. Talk about some goals that we  
18 want to meet. Talk about the different information we  
19 wanted to collect. And I think you know start scheduling  
20 as soon as possible, getting out there in California and  
21 talking to people. Because those sorts of logistics are  
22 hard to coordinate and you want to give people as much  
23 opportunity as possible to be heard. And that means  
24 giving them time to plan for it.

25 But I think it's really hard to be specific about

1 what we're going to do until as you mentioned we know what  
2 the strengths and weaknesses are of the different 14  
3 people and you know who we are and how we're going to work  
4 together. I think you can only plan ahead so much. But  
5 that as soon as we could, we would want to plan ahead as  
6 much as we could basically and to get started and not  
7 think, oh, September 15th, that's so far away. Because it  
8 will be there before we knew it. So I think we would just  
9 have to start working right away and not think of  
10 September 15th as far away.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What is your  
12 expectation of a time commitment for a Commissioner?

13 DR. MICHELSON: I'm expecting it would take over  
14 one's life. I warned my husband already. If this  
15 actually happens, you're in charge, because I think it  
16 would be an enormous time commitment and even if you  
17 weren't somewhere else, you would be home at your desk  
18 frantically working. Or I watched a little bit of one of  
19 the videos and I heard Mr. Ahmadi say he was dreaming  
20 about the applicants and I think that would probably  
21 happen. It would just take over your brain for  
22 nine months.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. What is your  
24 involvement been with state leaders to discuss how to  
25 reform California political system?

1 DR. MICHELSON: I haven't interacted much with  
2 political leaders. Mostly my interactions are with  
3 community leaders and students. I have been involved in  
4 the Voices for Reform, but that was at the Voices for  
5 Reform meetings, and then the leaders of that organization  
6 took our suggestions to the political leaders. So I  
7 haven't really had a lot of direct contact.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With these ten  
9 community -- I think it was the ten community areas --

10 DR. MICHELSON: Organizations.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Organizations. What  
12 were they and what did you learn from each of them?

13 DR. MICHELSON: Well, I can name them --

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Or just give me a  
15 general.

16 DR. MICHELSON: Well, so they were groups that  
17 have been active in minority APALC and CALPIRG, groups  
18 that have been -- and the Inland Empire, groups that have  
19 been working for decades in their respective communities  
20 not necessarily on getting out the vote, but just on  
21 helping these communities have more of a voice.

22 So, for example, CCAEJ until we came along had  
23 been focused on working on environmental justice. And  
24 Asian American Pacific Islander had been focused on legal  
25 rights of Asian Pacific Islander Americans. So we learn

1 from these variety of groups from some of them we learned  
2 how to get out the vote more effectively because some of  
3 them had been doing it for decades. And they really did  
4 have what one of them called the secrets sause that did  
5 have these amazingly powerful effects.

6           From other groups, you know we learned more about  
7 these communities, because as I said my expertise has  
8 mostly been on Latino politics so I didn't know much  
9 coming into this about African community like central Los  
10 Angeles, south Los Angeles or about the Asian communities  
11 in Orange County. And so we learned a lot about those  
12 communities and the diversity within those communities  
13 from those groups.

14           We learned a lot about how to interact with the  
15 real people, with the public. Because that's what they  
16 do. They interact with the real public. And things that  
17 maybe you wouldn't think of if you hadn't done that. Like  
18 if you have a meeting in the evening in a low income  
19 community, you're going to want to make it so folks can  
20 bring their kids or maybe you can have some toys or an  
21 assistant on the side to help the little kids so people  
22 can pay attention.

23           Or maybe you're going to need to provide for  
24 translation services. That there's things that you know  
25 if you weren't familiar with these communities you might

1 not think of. When would be a good time to hold a meeting  
2 and what you would need to provide at that meeting to make  
3 people feel comfortable in speaking and where to have the  
4 meeting has a huge impact on people. So we didn't really  
5 know those things coming in as pointy head academics. We  
6 knew other things, but not about the real world of these  
7 communities.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With these ten  
9 organizations that you're familiar with, how do you think  
10 that would impact you if you became a Commissioner?  
11 Working with them --

12 DR. MICHELSON: Yeah, I was thinking immediately  
13 that that would be a wonderful resource because I would be  
14 able to call folks up and say, you know, we need to have  
15 some public meetings in your area. We're coming out to  
16 Riverside. Where would be a good place to go? Can you  
17 help me figure out where we can have a meeting? When is a  
18 good time for people that regular folks are available to  
19 come to a public meeting? Do we have to be concerned  
20 about, as I mentioned before, providing simultaneous  
21 translation or providing some sort of child care?

22 I mean, those organizations have so much  
23 experience in those communities I think it would be a  
24 shame to not use those existing relationships that I now  
25 have with those organization to help us interact with

1 those communities.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Since there's other  
3 communities that you didn't go into, how would you as a  
4 Commissioner learn who you should contact and who should  
5 be a resource for you?

6 DR. MICHELSON: I think there I'd use what we  
7 academics call snowball sampling. You call a couple  
8 people. And then it's kind of like that old shampoo  
9 commercial. You call two friends and they call two  
10 friends and you use the network that you have to expand  
11 your network exponentially. Because I think all of these  
12 organizations know other organizations -- and especially I  
13 think the James Irvine Foundation, they know a lot of  
14 people. So I would be able to call my program officer and  
15 say, hey, do you know any organizations that I could talk  
16 to in Yolo County? And then from there, ask those people  
17 do you know anybody else in this community that's  
18 important to talk to? Hey, do you know anybody in the  
19 sierra counties that I should talk to and then ask those  
20 people is there anybody else here that I should talk to?  
21 It's a method that's used pretty often in academic  
22 research to find out who are the people that you need the  
23 talk to. And it seems to work pretty well. I would  
24 probably do that.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. What is your

1 philosophy of reforming California political system?

2 Because that was some of the I think research that you  
3 were doing?

4 DR. MICHELSON: I'm not doing so much research on  
5 reforming California. I did some recent research on  
6 redistricting in general.

7 I was asked to write a paper about the continuing  
8 or not importance of majority minority districts. And so  
9 I looked into that quite a bit and read all kind of law  
10 review articles which are very different from political  
11 science articles. So I don't know that I have a  
12 philosophy for reforming California government.

13 I have a deep belief that California is broken,  
14 that part of the reason it's broken is because it needs to  
15 be reformed. And I've heard a lot of different proposals  
16 for reforming it and some of those I think are a good  
17 idea, like redistricting reforms really good idea.

18 There's two year budgeting and open primaries, and there's  
19 a lot of different things that have been brought up in  
20 terms of how to make California work better. I think we  
21 need to be open to those ideas and we need as a state to  
22 try to make California better, because the recent news  
23 about California has been frustrating.

24 It's a very different California from when I was  
25 a small child and not always in good ways. That the



1 schools are broke, that the roads are full of potholes,  
2 that the bridges are falling down, and I think all of that  
3 comes back to Sacramento needing its political system  
4 reformed.

5           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. The last  
6 question, when you served as an evaluator with the James  
7 Irvine Foundation Initiative, you sought to improve  
8 turnout among low propensity voters. Could you isolate  
9 any outcomes and what does that mean and what was the  
10 outcome of your work?

11           DR. MICHELSON: So what we found worked as I said  
12 earlier is this personal invitation to vote. So one of  
13 the other professors that I worked with and I are  
14 currently finishing up a good manuscript about the results  
15 and our title is "Mobilizing Inclusion." That's what we  
16 found out is that you can mobilize people through making  
17 them feel included. That if you invite people to  
18 participate politically, even if they are low propensity,  
19 that you can have a marked effect on their rates of  
20 participation. And that's what we showed over and over  
21 again. That as much as you can try to personalize or make  
22 special an indirect invitation like a postcard or  
23 something that's left on someone's door or something like  
24 that, it's really only a door-to-door visit or a personal  
25 phone call that makes the difference. And that you can

1 increase turn out by double digits if you give people this  
2 personal invitation.

3           We specifically, for example, did one experiment  
4 with ALPAC where we asked people to vote and then if the  
5 person said, "Oh, yes, I'm going to vote," we called them  
6 again. And that second call also had an impact. So kind  
7 of letting people know that we care about them, but we're  
8 also watching them, that we're hoping that they'll come  
9 through with their commitment really makes a difference as  
10 well. So kind of this ongoing relationship that you can  
11 have with the community. We found it really helped if the  
12 people doing the inviting were considered a trusted source  
13 that either they were a neighbor or they were from a  
14 trusted long-standing community organization that they  
15 felt this group really cares about me.

16           I mean, we found out a lot of really cool things,  
17 but a lot about social capital, social network, and  
18 interpersonal relationships. And that politics really  
19 comes down to those personal relationships and feeling of  
20 accountability to your community that really helped out in  
21 terms of getting folks who don't tend to vote to vote.

22           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you very much.

23           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano.

24           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good morning or good  
25 afternoon. I'd like to know a little bit about the

1 knowledge you've gained from your redistricting research  
2 and how you plan if you're selected as a Commissioner to  
3 apply it to Commission work?

4 DR. MICHELSON: Well, the first thing I learned  
5 is that it's really, really complicated and -- I mean,  
6 it's just an enormous task. And in a way that's daunting  
7 to think you know to draw lines for the state of  
8 California would just be this enormous task and that there  
9 are so many things that you have to take into  
10 consideration.

11 And also that redistricting can only do so much.  
12 As I said, before you know, you have to draw some lines.  
13 And unless we change our political system to something  
14 like proportional representation, there's always going to  
15 be people who are dissatisfied and feel they're not being  
16 heard.

17 I also you know learned a lot about the  
18 difference between substantive representation and  
19 descriptive representation. Particularly for people of  
20 color, the idea of descriptive representation is that the  
21 person looks like you. Descriptively, it's a black  
22 community, they prefer to have a black community. If it's  
23 Latino community, they prefer to have -- but there's also  
24 substantive representation. You can't assume just because  
25 somebody is the same race or ethnicity as you they share

1 your opinions. And it's not necessarily true a  
2 representative has to be of your shared race or ethnicity  
3 to understand your community and represent you. So that  
4 the two are linked. And descriptive representation tends  
5 to bring substantive representation, but they're not the  
6 same.

7           And also I learned a lot about this ARC GIS  
8 software, which I think is an amazing tool. If I was  
9 selected for the Commission, I'd want to learn a lot more  
10 about it. But it seems like thank goodness we wouldn't  
11 have to draw the lines with pencil and paper. We would  
12 potentially have this great software where as I understand  
13 it. As you move the lines, gives you an update in terms  
14 of all sorts of statistics and so you really see how well  
15 are you doing in real time and there's not a lot of  
16 guesswork left. Although at the same time, I think it  
17 invites a lot more public scrutiny, because other people  
18 can see how here's the impact of how they moved that line  
19 over a millimeter.

20           And I also read a lot about the legal history,  
21 the challenges to minority districts, the court battles  
22 that take place whatever lines are drawn. So I think that  
23 also makes me a little bit weary of feeling like, oh,  
24 we're going to draw these lines and everything will be  
25 great because the truth is probably no matter what happens

1 it's going to end up in court. And so much in California  
2 does. And so just kind of as a reality check like  
3 whatever we do, we're going to need to be prepared for  
4 when this goes to court so we can defend what we've done  
5 and explain how what we did is appropriate. Because it's  
6 definitely not going to be the case that whatever the  
7 Commission does everyone will just say okay, great, thank.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Are you comfortable are you  
9 with knowing that's a potential?

10 DR. MICHELSON: I think I'll be okay. Again, I  
11 don't want to be over confident. Just knowing that's  
12 going to happen and that it won't be a surprise I think it  
13 will be okay.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And seems like your role has  
15 been of researcher of educator of an evaluator of voting  
16 behavior. I was curious to know how comfortable you are  
17 at making the decision and drawing the lines knowing it  
18 will impact the state of California over the next  
19 ten years.

20 DR. MICHELSON: That will definitely be a new  
21 role instead of being on the side criticizing to actually  
22 make a difference.

23 But it seems like -- I was talking about this  
24 with my husband -- it seems like my career for the past  
25 ten years has been moving me towards this, that I've been

1 doing all these experiments in voter mobilization that  
2 I've been talking about the problems with California and  
3 how we need reform and that, okay, great, now we figured  
4 out how to get people to vote. Now we have to make sure  
5 those votes really matter. And to a certain extent, you  
6 have to stop being an academic and get involved in your  
7 community and make things better.

8           And I while on the one hand I dread being chosen  
9 because it would take over my life for nine months, I feel  
10 like this would be so important and I could really  
11 potentially make a difference that I both dread and would  
12 welcome it at the same time you must feel the same way,  
13 having accepted this position.

14           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Life changing, I'd say.

15           DR. MICHELSON: And the Initiative was life  
16 changing that way. And looking back, I had no idea it  
17 would take over my life for four years. And yet, I'm very  
18 glad I did it. I feel like I did something really  
19 important and it was worth the time.

20           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: During the times that you  
21 were having discussions out in the public and soliciting  
22 input and doing your outreach, how did you feel about the  
23 contentious discussions and how did you handle it?

24           DR. MICHELSON: They didn't get too contentious.  
25 There were a couple where you just have to smile nicely

1 and try to make people feel like, okay, thanks. We really  
2 value your input. Yeah, I mean, I think there's -- it's  
3 so hard to not be able to when people are getting upset  
4 about something that's very important to them, it's hard  
5 to just not challenge them. And yet I know that you have  
6 to just let people be heard and make them feel like you  
7 know their opinions and their side is being taken into  
8 consideration and not escalate. And I think that as  
9 pretty much what we did when we were in the public.

10           If somebody tried to really heat things up, that  
11 we would just try to kind of defuse it and tell them we  
12 were hearing them and we appreciate them speaking and just  
13 not let it get to us. And you know talk about it later  
14 amongst ourselves and get the steam off, but to not let  
15 that be the public face and to just make sure everyone  
16 felt respected and listened to.

17           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Just remain calm.

18           DR. MICHELSON: Yeah. I think that's the thing  
19 to do. But it's much like being in the classroom,  
20 especially as a political scientist, especially when I  
21 teach minority politics, we talk about controversial  
22 stuff, affirmative action or immigration policy and Indian  
23 casinos. And people can get pretty worked up. And there  
24 have been some instances of screaming although not  
25 actually violence in my classrooms. Though I think I

1 through experience have learned how to make sure everyone  
2 stays calm and listens to each other and doesn't take it  
3 too personally, I think those are the sort of skills you'd  
4 have to use in those public meetings, those same skills.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I can see that.

6 When you conducted your research for your  
7 doctoral dissertation involving the analysis of data  
8 covering a decade of Congressional policy making, did you  
9 solicit input from elected officials at all?

10 DR. MICHELSON: I did. I wrote letters on  
11 official Yale stationary to pretty much every member of  
12 Congress asking them to write back and to help me with my  
13 research. And I think one of them wrote back. I did not  
14 get a lot of cooperation from, despite the letterhead.  
15 Thought it will say Yale, it will totally -- no.

16 So pretty much my dissertation was archival, was  
17 me sitting in the documents library for six hours a day  
18 writing stuff down, not a lot of actual interacting with  
19 members of Congress.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. If you're selected as  
21 Commissioner and as you complete your Commission work what  
22 are your aspirations following Commission work, if you've  
23 ever thought of it? Just curious.

24 DR. MICHELSON: Well, I think I would just go  
25 back to teaching. I mean, I don't know that I have any



1 aspirations that are specifically linked to the  
2 Commission's work. I'm hoping if I'm selected I would  
3 learn more about it that -- obviously, I would learn more  
4 about it. I would take something from it that I could  
5 bring to the classroom, because I don't have any actual  
6 political experience.

7 I never interned with a member of Congress or  
8 worked on a campaign. I've always been on the academic  
9 side and really never in the real side. And so I think  
10 that would enhance my teaching and my scholarship to have  
11 that appreciation of what actually happens and what things  
12 were like as a Commissioner. And so I'm hoping it would  
13 make me a better teacher.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. Can you tell me why  
15 you volunteered on the Palo Alto Unified School District  
16 to develop a new district food policy?

17 DR. MICHELSON: Well I, was invited. I wasn't a  
18 volunteering as being chosen. But I accepted because it  
19 was a very kind of bizarre thing that was going on in Palo  
20 Alto at this time which was there was this group of  
21 mothers that want Palo Alto to provide school lunches that  
22 were organic and local and no trans fats and no sugar.  
23 And that's great, but the truth is although we might have  
24 this reputation as being a very high income community,  
25 there are definitely people in Palo Alto who are not

1 wealthy. There are people who receive free or subsidized  
2 food at school. And these women wanted to make lunches be  
3 so super healthy and organic and local, but it was going  
4 to mean the price would go up.

5           So the superintendent wanted to make sure that  
6 all the voices were heard. I was specifically asked to be  
7 on a panel as a voice for those low income individuals who  
8 might have other priorities. So for these women, the  
9 priority was to have the children raise lettuce in the  
10 backyard of the school and then eat it. The priority for  
11 other people was their children would have lunch they  
12 could afford. And if they didn't qualify for the free  
13 lunch, they would be able to still be able to get their  
14 kid lunch.

15           So I mean, it was really I think crucial I was  
16 there, because I think those voices are easily overlooked  
17 and even though I'm not low income, I felt like I was a  
18 good voice for them. So I mean there was some really  
19 goofy thing where if you're free or subsidized lunch you  
20 have a card and you can only get the full hot lunch. If  
21 you of cash, you can go to the snack bar. This is a  
22 middle school. It's not elementary. And you go to the  
23 snack bar and get a pizza. All the cool kids go to the  
24 snack bar. All the kids with the cards have to go  
25 through -- well, how is that protecting the low income

1 kids? Supposed to be so anonymous, because we have the  
2 card. Well, it's not so anonymous. All the poor kids are  
3 going inside the cafeteria to get the full lunch and all  
4 the rich kids are waiting outside to get pizza. That's  
5 what was on my mind is making it opaque so nobody knew who  
6 was on free and subsidized lunch and everyone could afford  
7 to choose everything. And their priority was you know,  
8 local lettuce. So that was -- I'm really glad I did that.

9           But it was frustrating at times to listen to  
10 those moms. At the end of the day, they're going pack  
11 their kids lunch anyway. They weren't even letting their  
12 kids get the hot lunch. So I don't even know why they  
13 were so worked up.

14           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you. That's all the  
15 questions I have.

16           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Are there follow-up  
17 questions?

18           I certainly have some, but I'm willing to wait.

19           CHAIR AHMADI: I don't have any.

20           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

21           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Dr. Michelson, you indicated  
22 that you've done extensive work research work on  
23 districting and majority/minority districts. And, in  
24 fact, I think you said you recently wrote a paper about  
25 whether minority/majority districts are still necessary.

1 I wondered the answer that you found. And I also wondered  
2 your general thoughts and philosophy on redistricting as a  
3 result of this work.

4 DR. MICHELSON: The conclusion of my paper is  
5 that -- at least for Latinos, which is the community that  
6 I focused on for the paper, it is still necessary. That  
7 there are still significant barriers to Latino  
8 representation that require that little extra boost, that  
9 there are discrepancies in turnout, that there are  
10 discrepancies in mobilization, there are discrepancies in  
11 the recruitment and support of Latinos candidates. There  
12 are discrepancies in the degree in which Latinos are  
13 invited to vote versus other communities. And that there  
14 are barriers to representation that hopefully we will  
15 overcome as time passes, but that for the time being  
16 majority/minority Latino districts are still necessary.

17 And I think my overall take from my recent review  
18 of redistricting is that it's important to keep in mind  
19 communities that are not necessarily all citizens. So you  
20 know, given that the districts are supposed to represent  
21 people and not citizens, you need to be really attentive  
22 to different rates of citizenship and voting in different  
23 communities.

24 For example, just near where I live in east Palo  
25 Alto, the community is 60 percent Latino, but the local

1 government has been dominated by African Americans who  
2 were more historically the population in east Palo Alto  
3 and also have higher turnout rates. So there is a  
4 discrepancy between the population and the preferences of  
5 the population as represented on the school board and the  
6 City Council because of these differences in turnout and  
7 citizenship.

8           So more at large at the state level, I think we  
9 need to take those sorts of things into account and try to  
10 make it to the degree possible and to the degree to which  
11 it would be fair to make sure that the population is  
12 represented and not just the voting portion of the  
13 citizens.

14           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You talked a couple of  
15 times about learning some people need a personal  
16 invitation to vote. Why do some people need a personal  
17 invitation to vote and others do not?

18           DR. MICHELSON: Well, particularly in the  
19 communities that we studied, these low income ethnic  
20 communities, they don't consider politics that's about  
21 people like them. So when they think about you know, who  
22 is it that has power and who is it that is involved in  
23 politics, they think of wealthy people and they think of  
24 white people.

25           And so when you ask them why they don't get

1 involved in politics, this answer is usually, well,  
2 politics isn't for people like me. That's not what we do.  
3 And to get those communities to participate, you have to  
4 change their interpretation of who is allowed to  
5 participate in a way. You have to redefine for them what  
6 it means to be a citizen and who is supposed to be  
7 participating. So maybe they've grown up or been  
8 socialized into this idea that politics isn't for people  
9 like them. But if you call them or go to their house and  
10 you say, you know, it's really important that you vote,  
11 then they re-define what being a citizen is all about and  
12 they think, oh, I'm part of that community. I'm part of  
13 that group that's supposed to be involved. But without  
14 that personal invitation, it seems like that's not about  
15 me. That's about those other people. And that's the  
16 result of societal norms that you think of politics in  
17 that way because that's how society is telling you things  
18 are and maybe in your community nobody votes. I mean, if  
19 you're going to community where 7, 8 percent of registered  
20 voters are participating, nobody's voting.

21           And what was very striking about some of these  
22 communities was even though, for example, in Palo Alto  
23 there's signs everywhere, people have bumper stickers  
24 they're at the farmers market every weekend, and it's very  
25 clear that an election is coming. In some of these

1 communities, it was not. It was as if nothing was  
2 happening. There were no glossy mailers coming to their  
3 mail boxes. There are no signs on people's lawns. There  
4 were no outward signs it was election season.

5           And so again, they're getting this message of  
6 well, yeah, there's these ads on TV and we hear there is  
7 an election coming, but that's not us. That's not what's  
8 going on with us because nobody is even talking to them.

9           We were often -- the community organization I  
10 worked with their volunteers were often the only one  
11 reaching out to these voters. And we were targeting  
12 registered voters. It wasn't like we were registered  
13 voters these are people on the rolls and they still  
14 weren't being mobilized. So I think that's the problem is  
15 they just feel like politics isn't about people like them.

16           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Do you think the  
17 Commission's work will change that?

18           DR. MICHELSON: I think it could potentially  
19 change that. I think again if we can transform people's  
20 understandings of what it means to be a citizen in  
21 California, especially if we are going into these  
22 communities and having these public meetings and making  
23 people feel like they have a voice and that they're a part  
24 of the process, I think a lot of it is going to depend on  
25 how it's done.

1           And making that sort of transformative change  
2 happen is difficult and labor intensive. It's hard.  
3 There as millions and millions of people in California  
4 it's hard to have a personal conversation with every one  
5 of them. But the more that we can make people feel like  
6 this is about your community and your life and this is  
7 relevant to you and this is something that you should get  
8 involved in and that we welcome you to get involved in. I  
9 think even the invitation can have an effect on people.

10           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You said earlier in  
11 response to one of the standard questions the Commission  
12 work could not be done well. What does that mean to you?  
13 How could they not do it well? What would the result be  
14 that would be a bad outcome?

15           DR. MICHELSON: I think it's possible they could  
16 draw lines that were seen by people as illegitimate or  
17 biased. And it wouldn't necessarily be true that the  
18 lines were biased or unfair, but they could be perceived  
19 as unfair.

20           I think it's pretty unlikely that after  
21 nine months of hard work by 14 well qualified people  
22 they'd come up with bad lines either intentionally or  
23 unintentionally. But I think a lot of it is about  
24 perception in politics. It's not always about the facts.  
25 It's about perceptions.



1           So I think it's going to be really important for  
2 the Commission to do its work in a way that makes everyone  
3 feel like it was done well and fairly and taking  
4 everything into consideration. And that's something that  
5 would be I think easier to fail at than actually drawing  
6 good lines.

7           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How much do you think this  
8 first Commission should rely on the current district lines  
9 when it begins its work?

10          DR. MICHELSON: My initial gut reaction is not at  
11 all given how, as I mentioned earlier, the starting point  
12 can bias the outcome and also given how flawed the current  
13 lines are. And so I think it might be better to try to  
14 start from scratch or some other starting point that isn't  
15 so widely discredited.

16          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you. Are there  
17 other follow-up questions?

18          CHAIR AHMADI: I don't.

19          VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I have one question.

20                It's just kind of like a follow up to one of  
21 Stephanie's questions. It was when you were talking about  
22 the perceived that the public might perceive that the  
23 lines were drawn unfairly. What do you think the  
24 Commission can do to ensure that the public knows that  
25 there is that these lines were drawn fairly and openly?

1           DR. MICHELSON: I think it will be difficult, but  
2 I think for one, everything has to be very public as these  
3 meetings have been public and that will help. That a lot  
4 of it is going to rely on the Commission getting out the  
5 word about how decisions were made and why the lines were  
6 drawn and the way they were.

7           I think it would also possibly be interested to  
8 invite the public to submit their own lines like they did  
9 in Ohio last year. I think that idea that we're so open  
10 to drawing the lines you know go ahead, show us what you  
11 got. That the software is accessible enough that a  
12 dedicated regular member of the public could make their  
13 attempt and they could help you get ideas about how to  
14 make good decisions.

15          So a lot about -- kind of in general the idea  
16 that the Commission has to be very public about what  
17 they're doing and that there has to be enough opportunity  
18 and appropriate opportunity for the public to give their  
19 views back to the Commission. And I don't mean that that  
20 just means you know posting a website address and letting  
21 people type in comments. But like real meaningful  
22 opportunities comment and to interact with the Commission.

23          VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

24          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Anyone else? Ms. Spano?

25          PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No.

1           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I actually thought of one  
2 more. It dovetails on your comment that certain community  
3 believe that politics is for the wealthy people, wealthy  
4 white people. How important do you think diversity on the  
5 Commission is to getting people engaged?

6           DR. MICHELSON: Absolutely critical. As I  
7 mentioned before when I spoke of the difference between  
8 substantive and descriptive representation, there is a  
9 considerable amount of research that shows that  
10 descriptive representation in and of itself makes people  
11 more trusting of politicians more willing to contact  
12 public officials, makes them more willing to get involved.

13           So, for example, if you go into a community of  
14 color and you've got a Commission of white people, people  
15 of color aren't going to feel like they're listening to  
16 them. It's important to have a diverse Commission so the  
17 members of the public feels like this Commission  
18 understands me and is listening to me. So even though  
19 there is that disjoint between substantive and descriptive  
20 representation, descriptive has psychological effects on the  
21 public that are important and that, in this case, would  
22 lead members of the public to be more willing to speak up  
23 and come to the hearing and voice their opinions if they  
24 can look at the Commission and see themselves on that  
25 Commission.

1           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Very good. I don't  
2 believe we have any additional follow up questions.

3           Would you like -- you have 15 minutes. Would you  
4 like to make a closing statement?

5           DR. MICHELSON: No, I actually, I pretty much  
6 said everything I need to say. Thank for your time.

7           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Wonderful. Thank you so  
8 much for coming to see us Dr. Michelson. Let's go into  
9 recess until 12:59.

10           (Whereupon there was a short recess)

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1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It is 1:01. We have with  
2 us Daniel Seagondollar.

3 And are you ready to begin, Mr. Seagondollar?

4 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: I am.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Wonderful.

6 This begins the five-minute standard question.

7 What specific skills do you believe a good  
8 Commissioner should possess? Of those skills, which do  
9 you possess? Which do you not possess and how would you  
10 compensate for it? Is there anything in your life that  
11 would prohibit or impair your ability to perform all the  
12 duties of a Commissioner?

13 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: I'm going to have to ask you  
14 to go back when we complete one to answer the next one.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: That's fine. Just let me  
16 know. It's five minutes, 20 minutes.

17 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Yeah. Thank you.

18 Number one skill is going to be problem solving.  
19 That is what we're here to do. Analytical skills,  
20 computer-based analysis, and the ability to work with  
21 spreadsheets and other documents related to graphic  
22 lay-outs, and impartiality, which I think is going to be  
23 extremely important; the ability to communicate with the  
24 citizens of California and the individual other applicants  
25 at that time, Commissioners.

1           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: By the way, you do have  
2 the questions written down in front of you, if that helps  
3 you. Do you want me to break them down for you?

4           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: No, I'll go ahead and answer  
5 the next one.

6           Which of those skills do I possess? All of them.  
7 Can we go now?

8           The one -- as an architect, this is my life.  
9 Problem solving is the number one goal in architecture.  
10 Communication, remaining impartial is extremely important,  
11 particularly when it comes to negotiations related to  
12 conflicts with construction documents particularly between  
13 owners, contractors, planners, building departments, all  
14 of those things. I'm bound as an architect to protect  
15 health and safety first. And of course, as a  
16 professional, to protect my client to make sure that  
17 everything is going correctly with the project.

18           And then, of course, ultimately I'm bound to make  
19 sure that everything is fair in the construction documents  
20 and that all the interpretations and communications are  
21 held in a very equal and equitable manner.

22           And ultimately with the problem solving, the  
23 ultimate thing in my profession is to wind up with a  
24 solution at the end.

25           Which do I not -- which skill do I not possess?

1 Communication is probably the toughest one with me,  
2 because I tend to be very frank. And when I'm speaking,  
3 I'm usually trying to get a point across and I don't get  
4 too flowery. Sometimes that will throw people off.

5 But as my wife says, I have an opinion and we're  
6 all entitled it. But I've been working on that for a  
7 long, long time and I'm getting much better.

8 And as far as anything in my life to inhibit or  
9 impair me from performing the duties of a Commissioner,  
10 no, not at this time. This is the perfect time and place  
11 for me to take on this position.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance  
13 from your personal experience where you had to work with  
14 others to resolve a conflict or difference of opinion.  
15 Please describe the issue and explain your role in  
16 addressing and resolving the conflict.

17 If you are selected to serve on the Citizen's  
18 Redistricting Commission, tell us how you would resolve  
19 conflicts that may arise among Commissioners.

20 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: From my professional  
21 experience, again, that's what I do is resolve conflicts.  
22 I've been on numerous boards. For instance, the Boys and  
23 Girls Club, we decided eight years ago that it was time  
24 that we had a Boys and Girls Club in the high desert.  
25 Everybody thought it was a great idea, but not everybody

1 had the same idea of what the Boys and Girls Club would  
2 entail and what duties and obligations we would have.

3           And I was on the founding Board. And we went  
4 through a lot of Board members trying to get everybody  
5 narrowed down and focused on the same path. And it's  
6 disappointing and frustrating, because you want to see as  
7 many people in the process as possible, because at the  
8 end, you want it all-inconclusive Boys and Girls Club.

9           But you also have to stick to the primary goals  
10 and principles of the organization. So ultimately getting  
11 to the end of that process is a matter of clarifying and  
12 communicating and being impartial and making sure that  
13 everybody gets their opportunity to give input and  
14 adjusting your goals and things to make sure that you're  
15 complying with and making the organization work for the  
16 community.

17           There are many -- I could tell you stories about  
18 being called by contractors at 4:45 in the morning because  
19 a subcontractor didn't like the way the concrete, the  
20 foundation building was going to be poured. The concrete  
21 truck was on the way. And I had to go out to the job site  
22 and we had to work through the problem right there as the  
23 crew was pouring, starting to pour the concrete.

24           But that's pretty standard. That happens so  
25 often I really can't give you a specific because that's



1 one of the things I'm dealing with kind of crisis mode  
2 stuff when we're dealing with a variety of individuals,  
3 all who are trying to go toward -- go to the same place,  
4 get something accomplished, but having different ideas as  
5 to how to get there. And ultimately resolving the problem  
6 is imperative.

7           Let me see. How would I resolve conflicts  
8 between or Commissioners? Primarily, number one, stay  
9 impartial, listen, try and form consensus and look for  
10 first the small solutions and step toward the ultimate  
11 goal of eliminating or resolving the conflict by  
12 developing consensus. And that's essentially the primary  
13 goal we have to do that.

14           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
15 work impact the state? Which of these impacts will  
16 improve the state the most? Is there any potential for  
17 the Commission's work to harm the state? And if so, in  
18 what ways?

19           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: The Commission, our  
20 Commission, is going to create a California where there  
21 are no marginalized individuals, where every voter has a  
22 reason to vote and they feel they have something invested  
23 in the community and in their representative, that their  
24 representative is there to represent them.

25           And I would love to have as a -- how do I put

1 this -- reformed politician -- I ran for local office  
2 several times as a town counselman and never got elected.  
3 But what you realize while you're involved with that  
4 process and you're talking to campaign consultants and how  
5 the science, the political science behind a campaign --  
6 sending only campaign material out to high propensity  
7 voters. And you come to realize that so many people are  
8 marginalized by that process. Because if they don't vote,  
9 they don't get the information from the candidates that  
10 would make them interested. So that the general public,  
11 the pole voter who doesn't vote in every election, doesn't  
12 get all of the information from the people who are running  
13 for office.

14           And realize when we are involved in a campaign  
15 how frustrating that is. Because I went door to door. I  
16 had a bicycle, and I went door to door and knocked on  
17 doors. And sometimes I wound up there sitting there  
18 talking to people for an hour or 45 minutes on their porch  
19 and realized that everybody out there really has opinions  
20 and concerns about how the state is going. But they don't  
21 get the opportunity to be involved, because they've been  
22 marginalized by this political science process that  
23 basically because of the costs of a campaign leave them  
24 out.

25           So I think that as the most important thing --

1 and I would just love -- wouldn't we love to see  
2 100 percent from the registered voters voting and  
3 100 percent of the unregistered voters registered. So  
4 that would be my ultimate goal. And I think that would  
5 change the state of California. And that will be what  
6 improves the state of California.

7           Can we do harm? Certainly, if we don't remain  
8 impartial. If our districts or our ultimate solution  
9 marginalize more or doesn't take into account all of the  
10 demographics, everybody involved in the state of  
11 California, we could leave people even with a worse case  
12 of, "Well, it doesn't matter. I don't have a voice on  
13 this, so it doesn't matter if I'm involved." And we could  
14 have even more people marginalized or disassociated with  
15 this process. And that would be really unfortunate.

16           We have the propositions on the next election  
17 ballot that are going to be at issue, one giving more  
18 authority to the Commission and one taking all the  
19 authority away. So I hope that the voters in California  
20 will give us the opportunity and put that responsibility  
21 in the hands of the Commission and take it away from the  
22 legislative body who quite honestly hasn't used it to the  
23 best of our advantage.

24           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Does that conclude your  
25 answer?

1           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Yes. That's number three.

2           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where  
3 you've had to work as part of a group to achieve a common  
4 goal. Tell us about the goal, describe your role within  
5 the group, and tell us how the group did or did not work  
6 collaboratively to achieve this goal.

7           If you are selected to serve on the Citizen's  
8 Redistricting Commission, tell us what you would do to  
9 foster collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure  
10 the Commission meets it's legal deadlines.

11          MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Number one, we'll go into that  
12 backwards, because a lot of that I answered in I believe  
13 in one or -- well, number two.

14          But number one, we have to set up a schedule.

15          I'm going backwards here as far as our legal  
16 deadlines.

17          We have to have a schedule, and we have to have  
18 deadlines and recognize that we have to have weigh points  
19 at which we can determine how well we're doing and how  
20 well we're progressing through the process. And if we are  
21 not moving fast enough, as Commissions tend to get bogged  
22 down in minutia of Commission work, you have to set goals  
23 that until you actually come down to an efficient process  
24 whereby you can get through each decision in an efficient  
25 and impartial manner.

1           And the primary duty is if we have 14  
2 individuals, as an architect, designed by Committee is  
3 scary, because you have 14 people and they can all have  
4 the same goal in mind. And we all know there's nine ways  
5 to skin a cat. There's -- trust me, from being in  
6 architecture there's a lot more than that. Everybody has  
7 a different idea how to get there. Everybody should get  
8 the opportunity.

9           We will need a Chairman who is strong enough to  
10 maintain the decorum of the Committee and be sure that  
11 everybody is equally recognized but that we move forward  
12 in an efficient manner.

13           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
14 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
15 from all over California who come from very different  
16 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you are  
17 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the  
18 specific skills you possess that will make you effective  
19 at interacting with the public.

20           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: I love learning about  
21 everybody that I meet. It's my passion. I just love to  
22 know what makes people tick --

23           MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

24           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: -- as they're -- as an  
25 architect, I sit down and we discuss everybody about if

1 I'm working with a major developer, I have to find out  
2 what he wants out of a major project and how we're going  
3 to apply that into a community where he may or may not be  
4 welcomed. And it's my job as an architect to go into the  
5 community, find out what they want, and apply that to the  
6 goals of my client.

7 Same thing goes with this. Finding out what  
8 people want and how to get there is the most important  
9 aspect of this Commission and of my professional life.

10 I also need to do that with my wife, because I  
11 have to continually find out what she wants. That's  
12 personal.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: That concludes our  
14 standard five minutes.

15 Mr. Ahmadi, would you like to begin your Q and A?

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you.

17 Good afternoon, Mr. Seagondollar.

18 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Yes.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you very much. I  
20 have a number of questions, of course, and I will need 20  
21 minutes.

22 The first question I'm going to ask you is going  
23 back to your application. Part of the application you  
24 mention something about everybody has biases or all are  
25 subject to biases. I was just wondering if you can share

1 with me some of your biases in detail.

2 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: You only have 20 minutes.

3 (Laughter)

4 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Well, primarily, my biases  
5 relate to people who are not willing to open up to other  
6 ideas. And that involves people who have -- we have so  
7 much diversity. And when I run into somebody who is so  
8 stuck in an ideology that they can't move beyond that, I  
9 get very frustrated with that. So essentially, I can tend  
10 to put my opinion -- overlay my opinion over what they're  
11 saying and shut off to those ideas which is a bias. And I  
12 have to be very careful I don't do that.

13 And in my dealings professionally with planning  
14 departments, building departments, city agencies, NIMBYs  
15 as we called them in the construction industry, not in my  
16 backyard people who, no matter if the project fits the  
17 zoning, fits everything, they still don't want it. It's  
18 very frustrating. So essentially have to work very hard  
19 with those people to make sure they calm down.

20 I don't have any racial or cultural biases. Like  
21 I said, I love people. I love to go out and inter-mix  
22 with people of all cultures and all races.

23 My brother is married to an hispanic. I have two  
24 nephews who are hispanic. My stepson is married to a  
25 hispanic. I have two grandchildren who are hispanic. I

1 love them dearly. I mean, there is no issue regarding.

2 My wife is an immigrant. She's a naturalized  
3 citizen. She came here from Germany when she was nine  
4 years old. The only word she could say is bubble gum.  
5 She's an attorney in the state -- member of the State Bar.

6 So there are opportunities. I don't have any  
7 biases that will prevent me from working on this  
8 Committee.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you so  
much.

10 Going back to another question from your  
11 application, and it's basically in general terms, you talk  
12 about your experiences when you were running for local  
13 office. If you can please tell me how does that  
14 experience relate to your work on the Commission in more  
15 detail? In other words, specifically about your ability  
16 to connect with the people and did you face any  
17 challenges? And if yes, what those challenges were or  
18 what aspect of that experience can bring some values to  
19 you to use as part of your responsibility in the  
20 Commission should you be selected?

21 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Yes, the whole process from  
22 being a candidate for public office is very challenging,  
23 because you are questioned daily in the media. You are --  
24 if you think you have the best idea in the world and your  
25 opponent will tear it apart, not because he doesn't like



1 the idea, but because it's your idea. And that is the  
2 political game and you realize that.

3           And you still manage to work with these  
4 individuals and continue, because ultimately, everybody is  
5 working toward a common goal and that is trying to create  
6 in my case just a local election so we're all working for  
7 a better community. We just have a different perception  
8 how to get there and what that will be.

9           The election process, I previously spoke about  
10 being involved with campaign consultants. And their  
11 efforts are primarily in my greatest frustration are  
12 focused on getting the information out to the high  
13 propensity voter through the mailers and things like that.  
14 And even those telephone calls we all hate to get all come  
15 from a list of high propensity voters.

16           That's why I went door to door. I wore out two  
17 sets of tires on my bicycle going door to door and just  
18 walking down the street. They gave call lists where you  
19 can walk down the street and know who's a high propensity  
20 voter, and only go to that doorway. Not only was that  
21 complicated, but it just seems like a better idea to me to  
22 go down the street and knock on the doors. And like I  
23 said, you learn like that.

24           How will those experiences work in this  
25 Commission? I think it's important that we recognize that

1 as a Commission that's what we're trying to do is set this  
2 up so that these candidates for public office can connect  
3 with people and all the people, not just the high  
4 propensity voters.

5           So as far as having districts that are  
6 geographically connected and diverse so we create a  
7 balance so that the candidate isn't just attempting to  
8 satisfy or placate one political party or one ideology  
9 over another, but has to put out a message that is all  
10 encompassing to get the state of California moving in the  
11 right direction.

12           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

13           So I'm sure that you realize how challenging the  
14 time demand could be in the process of doing that to get  
15 the people connected and all that. So the Commission has  
16 a deadline to meet. In your short length of time to do  
17 all of that, to create that network to hear from people,  
18 for example, do you have any pre-notions or some ideas  
19 about what may be helpful in doing that in such a short  
20 length of time?

21           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Well, of course, yes. We're  
22 going to have public hearings. We should take testimony  
23 from individuals that are interested. Make sure as many  
24 people are knowledgeable of the hearing as possible. Take  
25 both written and spoken testimony.

1           We, in some cases -- I would hope that we would  
2 have budget money for interpreters or translators so that  
3 people are comfortable writing in their native language if  
4 they're immigrants. This state is a state of immigrants  
5 and we have to recognize that.

6           And basically during public hearings set a time  
7 limit. It's frustrating. But if you say you have three  
8 minutes, speak, speak succinctly and get to your point,  
9 and then mandate that. Don't allow people to -- the word  
10 is not coming to mind. Not pontificate from a podium to  
11 the Board. Keep it succinct and keep the meetings moving.

12           And again, have a schedule, make it a legitimate  
13 schedule and we will meet those deadlines. And that's  
14 where it has to go. And individual community meetings all  
15 have to be committed to meeting the schedule deadlines.

16           CHAIR AHMADI: So let me just ask a  
17 hypothetical question. As you may imagine, the Commission  
18 has to contract some of the services with consultants or  
19 outside entities. Assuming that you have a contractor who  
20 is not fulfilling the requirements of the contract or the  
21 terms of the contract and has consistently failed to meet  
22 a deadline, for example, how would you enforce -- how  
23 would you react to that or prevent that or if that  
24 happens, what are you going to do to compensate for that?

25           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Again, you're addressing my

1 professional life, dealing with contractors that aren't  
2 meeting the schedules and deadlines are -- as a matter of  
3 fact, I only had two phone calls this morning regarding  
4 contractors who aren't meeting schedules and deadlines.

5           Number one, notify them what their deadline is  
6 and make it very clear that you will have weigh points  
7 within their contracts that specify when they will have  
8 certain things done. If they don't have those things to  
9 you, you notify them they will have it. And ultimately if  
10 it comes down to a situation where the Board or the  
11 Commission is not satisfied with their performance, you  
12 have to have another contractor in line that can pick up  
13 the information.

14           To that end, you want to make sure that any  
15 information that the contractor has prepared to date is  
16 the property of the Commission and not of that contractor  
17 so that you don't wind up in a situation where you have to  
18 start from scratch for whatever obligation that that  
19 contractor was supposed to perform.

20           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

21           What rules, laws, regulations, criteria do you  
22 think the Commission must or may consider when redrawing  
23 the districts and why?

24           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Well, we've got the Federal  
25 Voters Rights Act. We have the California Voters Right

1 Act. We've got certain districts -- and I'm not sure how  
2 these apply, but we have certain districts within  
3 California that have to comply with the Federal Voters  
4 Rights Act and I believe they're called Section 5 Voters  
5 Rights Act who have to comply with federal standards. So  
6 I presume that we'll have certain levels on that. But  
7 certainly we're going to have to meet the criterias  
8 established by those two. And of course the  
9 Constitution -- state of California Constitution. And a  
10 ton of other stuff I've read, but I can't remember.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: That's okay. Thank you.

12 And I believe by Voter Right Act, you mean the  
13 Voting Rights Act?

14 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: That's correct.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. So another kind of  
16 legal question or relates to the legal requirements.

17 To ensure redistricting maps will not be  
18 overturned on legal challenge, what fundamental principle  
19 or philosophy would you need to follow?

20 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Consistency, uniform  
21 application, the public hearings will have to be open and  
22 noticed. As a former Planning Commissioner for the  
23 community I live in, we had to recognize all the  
24 publications for public hearings, posting of the agendas  
25 and formal notes, meeting quorum requirements and for both

1 hearings and for the voting on different districts.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

3 One last question. What would you say to a  
4 person who suspects that your personal family or financial  
5 relationship or commitments or aspirations may improperly  
6 influence your decisions on the Commission?

7 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: What would I say to them?

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes.

9 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: I'd ask them to provide me  
10 with specifics, because I wouldn't honestly be aware of  
11 any.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: So let's say they give you  
13 the specifics. How would you go about resolving that?

14 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Well, if there were specifics,  
15 I would either -- if we're talking about a family member  
16 with a conflict, certainly I would make sure that that  
17 family member ceases and desists whatever element that  
18 they were -- whatever practice they were involved in that  
19 was a conflict.

20 If for whatever purpose they failed to do that,  
21 then my ultimate solution would be that I would have to  
22 withdraw from the Board. I wouldn't -- certainly wouldn't  
23 put the Commission in a -- jeopardize the Commission by my  
24 own personal or any individual around these attempts to be  
25 opportunistic over my appointment.

1 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. I have no  
3 questions.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Hello, Mr.  
6 Seagondollar.

7 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Hi there.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: While you were a  
9 volunteer and Board member for the Boys and Girls Club of  
10 High Desert, what have you learned about communities of  
11 interest that are different from your own?

12 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Everything. It's a situation  
13 where you can't look at any individual and apply your  
14 standards to them without knowing -- without knowing  
15 everything, even within different areas of community  
16 interest, you can't just apply a certain bias or a set  
17 certain opinion to the entire community.

18 The Boys and Girls Club, when we set that up, of  
19 course, we go into it -- like I mentioned earlier, we each  
20 went into it. We had about 15 Board members initially  
21 that developed the charter and were involved with getting  
22 the charter going. And then ultimately you find out that  
23 each one of those wants to serve at a different portion of  
24 the community. We had to sit down and determine the area  
25 of most need and who -- how we can best apply ourselves to

1 meet the needs of that area.

2           And in those areas of most need, there were  
3 strata of individuals who needed certain levels of help  
4 and certain -- some people just needed someplace for their  
5 kids to go during the day. Others needed food and  
6 direction on legal issues and certainly a whole plethora  
7 of problems and issues that were necessary in that area of  
8 most need.

9           Now, we have in that community, in that region,  
10 the desire to open up at least five more clubs. And each  
11 one has to meet the specifics of that area within our  
12 region. And we are going out and doing studies and  
13 different things to try to meet them. Some of them need  
14 Boys and Girls Club houses. Some of them just need  
15 outreach. Some of them just need an athletic facility.  
16 Others need direction and help with domestic violence and  
17 drug abuse and nutrition problems. So there is a  
18 tremendous amount of different issues that you have to  
19 deal with as far as that goes.

20           I hope that answered your question. I don't know  
21 what else to say.

22           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: When you were trying  
23 to determine the needs, how did you go about determining  
24 the needs of these areas?

25           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Well, we used demographic



1 profiles. You know, you can look at economic strata,  
2 household incomes, per capita incomes, the educational  
3 quality, the dropout rate, the crime rate, the crime rate  
4 that's associated with juvenile activity, the recidivism  
5 among even juveniles, which was our focus was the  
6 juveniles and trying to catch them and actually catch them  
7 while they're young, but give them a different channel  
8 when they're young.

9           Focusing primarily on ninth graders where they  
10 have the opportunity to go one way or the other. You have  
11 one chance, one summer to keep them from going the wrong  
12 direction. And focusing on that age group and making sure  
13 that you work with that group, make sure that your  
14 programs are focused on that.

15           And like I said, that's basically -- you have to  
16 start with the statistics but then you have to go out in  
17 the community and actually have community interaction and  
18 find out how to meet those needs the best. It's a very  
19 large region.

20           And one of the problems with having a bricks and  
21 mortar Boys and Girls Club was how do the kids get there?  
22 And so we went to the schools and asked the schools can  
23 you provide transportation. If you're going to have a bus  
24 stop, why not make it the Boys and Girls Club? So we  
25 actually do that. We have children in need being brought

1 by school bus. And that was their after-school drop-off  
2 for the bus stop, rather than going home and be at a home  
3 where the mother and father were both working or weren't  
4 at home or for whatever reason they weren't responsible.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Can you expand on what  
6 different perspectives to life did you identify in various  
7 locations and people that you came in contact with? Also  
8 how that would impact voter preferences?

9 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: I didn't get the first  
10 sentence.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Can you expand on what  
12 different perspectives to life did you identify in the  
13 various locations and people that you came in contact with  
14 through your travels and everything and also what you  
15 learned? How would that impact voter preferences?

16 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Perspectives to life, some  
17 people don't want to be bothered. They just want to live  
18 their life. They don't want to be particularly political.  
19 They don't want to be involved. They have their own thing  
20 to do. And although that is frustrating, that's really  
21 quite admirable. It's fun to be involved in just your own  
22 thing.

23 I'm very -- I tend to be very volunteer oriented.  
24 I have trouble saying no. But there is a lot of people  
25 that just don't want to be involved. And so it takes --

1 to get to them, you're going to have to identify with  
2 whatever nuance it is that will perk up their ears, will  
3 get their attention. And finding that is sometimes  
4 difficult, because again sometimes they just don't want to  
5 be involved. And that to me is confusing, but it is a  
6 reality.

7 I think -- well, maybe that answers your  
8 question. I'm not sure.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You were saying that  
10 some people are just do not want to be involved and you  
11 have to find out what will make them involved. Did you  
12 find -- did you identify any other people during your  
13 travels throughout the state or and how that might affect  
14 voter preferences and how that would help you during your  
15 Commission work?

16 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Well, certainly, the people  
17 that don't want to be involved -- you have the people that  
18 want to know what's in it for them. And you kind of have  
19 to have your radar up, your antenna tuned to people who  
20 are there to see how much they can take out of any given  
21 situation. And then you have people who want to be  
22 involved but don't want to do the heavy lifting.

23 So essentially, you have all these different  
24 categories. How do you find them? It requires -- again,  
25 I believe that's what the public hearing process is for:

1 So that you have the opportunity to actually use your  
2 antenna, use my professional experience, use my experience  
3 as a Planning Commissioner, use my experience from the  
4 Boys and Girls Club and the different Commissions I've  
5 been in the community to be able to identify what those  
6 would be. And essentially light a spark. Get some  
7 motivation.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

9 In your application you stated making a place  
10 where such a diverse population can thrive will require  
11 you to form representation. What did you mean by this  
12 statement?

13 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Uniform -- from my  
14 professional background, we have the Uniform Building  
15 Code. It is a standard that you apply to every building.  
16 But inside that code, there are specifications for each  
17 specific type of use of building. So when you have  
18 uniform representation, the representation that you have  
19 in one district and those standards may be completely  
20 different than those required by another district. And  
21 those are the standards that have to be developed within  
22 each direct.

23 And ultimately all we can do as a Commission is  
24 try and level the field so that everybody gets the  
25 opportunity to be heard and considered by the candidates

1 for the elected office. And that means that those  
2 candidates are going to have to go out and recognize the  
3 individual interests of the individuals they're supposed  
4 to be representing and be able to formulate policy that  
5 represents them within their community and the state as a  
6 whole. So it's a tiered process basically.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In one of your  
8 responses to the five questions, you were saying that for  
9 communications sometimes you're a little frank when you're  
10 talking with individuals, but you're working on it. How  
11 do you think -- since, as a Commissioner, you're going to  
12 be going out to so many different areas and meeting so  
13 many different individuals, how do you think your  
14 communication will be during these situations and how will  
15 you try to overcome that?

16 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: I'm going to go to my  
17 professional life. I've been involved with development  
18 and architecture as a licensed architect for nearly 30  
19 years. In those 30 years, I have never had a project  
20 denied at any public hearing at a Planning Commission or  
21 at the staff level.

22 So as a professional, as a Commissioner, my  
23 opinion is not as important as the goal. And I certainly  
24 do have opinions and I think I have a right to voice my  
25 opinions and individuals have a right to tell me you're

1 wrong.

2           And quite honestly, I appreciate that. I enjoy  
3 that, because then we can come off center or come off  
4 whatever position we are on and start looking at what it  
5 is, how I got to the conclusion.

6           And I do this in design. If you've ever designed  
7 anything, you sit down with a blank sheet of paper and you  
8 invest yourself in it to the point where pride of  
9 authorship starts taking control. And I learned very  
10 early in my career as an architect that's a very dangerous  
11 thing to do, to put pride of authorship in your  
12 preliminary concepts, because what it does is it limits  
13 your ability to accept input from other people who are  
14 going to look at that.

15           And when you roll out a set of plans -- like I  
16 said, there's nine ways to skin a cat. Well, there's a  
17 heck of a lot more ways than that.

18           When I sit there and people critique my work,  
19 everything from colors to anything else, I have to be open  
20 and ready to accept that and essentially communicate with  
21 them why, number one, if something is important, why it's  
22 important. And why I believe it's something that we  
23 should consider. But at the same time, that goes both  
24 ways. When they tell me something is important and I have  
25 to consider it also. That's how I'm working on it. As I

1 said, in 30 years I've been pretty successful.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What would be your  
3 major contributions to the Commission from all the life  
4 experience that you've had?

5 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Well, I think life experiences  
6 are the important part of it, and that will certainly help  
7 me in making my decisions. My technical background in  
8 planning demographics, geographics is related to the field  
9 of architecture that correlate over -- correlate into what  
10 we're doing here. I believe it will be very important.

11 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Do you have anything  
13 you want to add?

14 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: No.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: That's all I have  
16 right now.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you.

18 Mr. Seagondollar, Ms. Spano apologizes, but she  
19 isn't feeling well and she asked me to ask questions on  
20 her behalf. So if it's okay with the panel, what I'd like  
21 to do is spend Ms. Spano's time asking her questions and  
22 then I have some of my own. But I don't want to cheat Ms.  
23 Spano out of her time by substituting my own questions.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: That's fine. Thank you.

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You mentioned in your

1 response on your essays that you're interested in serving  
2 on the Citizen's Redistricting Commission because this is  
3 the kind of work you enjoy. Can you provide some context  
4 regarding this response, seeing that you haven't had prior  
5 redistricting experience?

6 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: The process very similar,  
7 although we are of course dealing with a different  
8 ultimate objective, it's an objective where we're dealing  
9 with areas for election for electorals is very similar to  
10 planning and development.

11 I've sat on General Plan Advisory Committees  
12 where essentially we went street by street, block by  
13 block. The town I live in is 72 square miles. And we  
14 took public hearings and essentially land use zoned based  
15 on traffic demographics, geographics, environmental  
16 issues. Virtually everything -- I wouldn't say  
17 everything, but many of the things we're going to be  
18 applying to the Redistricting Commission. And we had a 15  
19 man and women Commission, all of them coming from  
20 different perspectives and backgrounds and ultimately  
21 winding up with a very good product at the end. And  
22 virtually nobody disagreeing that it was a bad thing.

23 I really enjoyed that. I really enjoyed that  
24 process. I enjoyed the analytical aspect of it. I  
25 enjoyed looking for solutions when we had conflicts of



1 concept and ideas as to what different areas in the  
2 community should ultimately become. And we were able to  
3 resolve all of those to the overall general satisfaction  
4 of the community. It was accepted wholly without any  
5 rejection.

6           So I'm looking to do more of that and on a larger  
7 scale sounds great. Not to mention I get to run around  
8 the state and meet more people and see more of California.  
9 It's a great excuse.

10           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What years did you serve  
11 on the Apple Valley Planning Commission?

12           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: '94 to '98.

13           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How much value did you see  
14 in the public testimony that was provided by advocates and  
15 protagonists during the public hearings you had at the  
16 Commission?

17           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Total, 100 percent value and  
18 zero value. It depends on the credibility you place on  
19 the individual giving the testimony.

20           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How would you assess  
21 credibility of individuals who came before you on the  
22 Citizen's Redistricting Commission?

23           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Well, it becomes a process of  
24 validity. It's not entirely difficult to see if somebody  
25 is being genuine. Beyond that, if their testimony has any

1 value, then it's there and you've weighed it against the  
2 overall testimony of all the individuals involved. If you  
3 have conflicts between testimony, some people will have  
4 very minor concerns that to them are 100 percent of the  
5 issues and others will have very large concerns that are  
6 going to be one percent of the issues. And you have to  
7 weight it all against all of the input with the written  
8 demographic, geographic and individual testimony before  
9 you can come up with a solution.

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Did you frequently  
11 encounter contentious discussions in your work on the  
12 Planning Commission?

13 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Yes.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How did you handle it?

15 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: We never had a fist fight.  
16 That's a good place to start.

17 No, number one, the Chairman controlling the  
18 tenure of the meeting, maintaining the fact that everybody  
19 in the room is there for the same reason and that is that  
20 their concerns be addressed.

21 And essentially the decorum of the meeting, being  
22 sure that the people there were providing public testimony  
23 who don't necessarily know the Roberts Rules of Order, who  
24 don't know the proper etiquette for a public meeting, that  
25 they -- but the Chairman be kept in line, for lack of a

1 better term. And that the focus stay on what we're there  
2 for and that is to take public input and to come up with a  
3 solution.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Were you the Chair?

5 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: I was the Chair for one year,  
6 yes.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: For one year?

8 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: One year.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So what was your  
10 experience in terms of serving in the position of a  
11 leadership position and a non-leadership position on the  
12 Commission? Did you have a preference one way or the  
13 other? Was it difficult to not be a leader?

14 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: I enjoyed it. The only  
15 challenge with being a Chairman is it tends to put you in  
16 a situation where it's hard to absorb all the testimony  
17 while you're running the meeting.

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Now you know why I'm  
19 asking the five questions.

20 (Laughter)

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Sorry. I didn't mean to  
22 interrupt you.

23 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: No.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How much public  
25 transparency was involved in the Commission's work, the

1 Planning Commission's work?

2 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: As much as I could possibly  
3 insert into it. I became very frustrated with our staff  
4 who tended to not produce the documents in a timely  
5 manner, make them available, and the different shenanigans  
6 that go on when developers and planners and different  
7 individuals get involved with behind closed doors meetings  
8 and lunches and things like that.

9 But I have to say that I definitely frustrated a  
10 lot of individuals by demanding transparency. And --  
11 because there is no reason to have a public hearing  
12 process unless you're going to have total transparency.  
13 And there is no reason that you're trying to hide  
14 anything. If you're trying to hide something, you  
15 shouldn't be doing it. It just shouldn't happen.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Can you give me some  
17 examples of your ability to build collaboration and trust  
18 between opposing groups, be those two subcontractors or  
19 people coming before you in one of your Boards or  
20 Commissions?

21 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: I can give you a tour of every  
22 building I ever was involved with having built. Each and  
23 every one of them. I'm involved with several right now  
24 where we have contentious issues, from the style of  
25 architecture to individuals who, regardless of how hard we

1 try or have compliance meet compliance, are just not going  
2 to accept the proposal.

3           How do we deal with that? As best we can.

4 Always trying to find the common ground. Always trying to  
5 get as many people happy and satisfied with what you're  
6 doing as possible. And that's again what my professional  
7 and quite honestly as a husband and father in my personal  
8 life is about.

9           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So the Commission is going  
10 to start up and sort of I think assume hit the ground  
11 running. You don't have a lot of time to gain the  
12 public's trust. Do you have ideas about how the  
13 Commission can do that in a short period of time?

14           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Keep it as open as possible.  
15 Communicate on the simplest possible level. Leave out the  
16 acronyms. And speak plainly, recognizing that most people  
17 are not -- these public hearings and things tend to become  
18 if you're not careful -- be involved with the public  
19 hearing process, you start using acronyms and you start  
20 using terms and it becomes like a soap opera. You can't  
21 just go to one and know -- you sit there and say, "What's  
22 as happening? I don't know. I wasn't here last time."

23           So in each of those processes, because we're  
24 going to be going all over the state, we have to make each  
25 one very clear and very plain and get everybody in the

1 room to understand so that nobody is left out by not  
2 understanding the process.

3           So I think for that reason, it would be very  
4 important to have the agenda clearly posted, possibly in  
5 multi-lingual and walk through the agenda. And if there  
6 is any definitions or acronyms that for sake of time we'll  
7 need to use, then post them on the wall. Have them up  
8 there so everyone knows what the acronym means and what  
9 these different acts and compliance we have to do are.  
10 Basically get people invested in that by getting them to  
11 know and understand what it is we're doing.

12           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Tell me how you recognize  
13 the state benefits by having persons of all demographics  
14 characteristics and from all geographic locations  
15 participate in the electoral process.

16           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Because it makes it a lot more  
17 fun. It just makes sense that the more people would get  
18 involved, the better the ideas and concepts will get. If  
19 we have a situation where we have one group of people with  
20 one ideology dictating their ideology across the entire  
21 state and the other people -- everybody else just fall  
22 out. We'll create sub-cultures and sub-communities that  
23 just will not want to be involved with being a citizen of  
24 California and won't want to then volunteer their time and  
25 efforts to make it a better place.

1           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I notice in your  
2 application that you have served in a lot of capacities,  
3 supplemental and Commissioner for the California  
4 Architect's Board, Governors' Office of Emergency Services  
5 Structural Evaluation, California Architects Board.  
6 Covered that. How did you get those positions?

7           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: The Governor's Office of  
8 Emergency services, that position came out of the North  
9 Ridge earthquake where essentially the architects,  
10 structural engineers, and anybody involved with the  
11 construction professionals involved with the construction  
12 industry were essentially deputized to go into the North  
13 Ridge and surrounding communities and identify structures,  
14 the level of damage to different structures. We were  
15 given a hard hat and a flashlight. And they tied a rope  
16 around our waist, and we walked into building of  
17 questionable structural stamina in the middle of the  
18 shaking. And the rope was to find us if the building  
19 falls. So that's essentially how that started.

20           And then the Office of Emergency Services  
21 recognized that value and went out and started invited  
22 architects to become part of that -- part of the Office of  
23 Emergency Services and essentially put us in the position  
24 of being ready to respond to any disasters. We haven't  
25 had any since then.

1           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Well, I guess what I'm  
2 getting at basically is whether or not either one of those  
3 were appointments by the Governor, the Legislature, and if  
4 so, when those appointments took place.

5           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: No. They were essentially  
6 both volunteer. I was nominated, but it was both based on  
7 volunteering.

8           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How do you see yourself  
9 being able to perform the work of the Commission amid all  
10 your other responsibilities, including business and newly  
11 appointed position to the General Plan Advisory Committee.

12          MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: The General Plan Advisory  
13 Committee has finished its work. So that is no longer an  
14 issue.

15          In case you are not aware, the construction  
16 industry at this time is in somewhat of a lull, so I do  
17 have quite a bit of time on my hands at this time. I set  
18 myself up.

19          I recognize that this was a likely possibility  
20 for the construction industry at this time and set up my  
21 life so that I could basically have this free time. When  
22 this opportunity came along, I'm like, wow, this is the  
23 convergence of the universe. Everything has come  
24 together. I can do it. I have the experience and the  
25 background and I'm ready to do it. It's an exciting



1 opportunity.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Why should the panel  
3 select you over one of the other remaining applicants?

4 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Because I'm passionate. I'm  
5 qualified. And like the rest of them, I want to do it.

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Very good. Let me just  
7 check through Ms. Spano's notes to make sure I have hit or  
8 someone else has hit most of her questions.

9 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: I told you these interviews  
10 after lunch were tough.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe for me what  
12 factors constitute a community of interest in your mind.  
13 Are communities of interest involving racial or ethnic  
14 commonality more important than other kinds of communities  
15 of interest and why or why not?

16 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: No. Community of interest is  
17 any group of individuals who get together and have a  
18 common experience.

19 Are their positions more important? Only if  
20 their common experience is one where they have been  
21 deprived of their civil rights. And that doesn't  
22 necessarily mean in a Supreme Court lawsuit that it could  
23 essentially not having access to the voting process, being  
24 marginalized essentially.

25 The different experiences of different groups

1 essentially of course when they are that group, it is the  
2 most important thing to them. And that is when that being  
3 able to weigh -- put the weight of their testimony into  
4 the decisions is important.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't have any more  
6 questions for Ms. Spano.

7 Do Mr. Ahmadi or Ms. Camacho have any more  
8 questions of the applicant?

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Not right now, no.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't have any at this  
11 moment, but I may. So you can go ahead.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I have follow-up  
13 questions.

14 You talked a little bit about how when you were  
15 organizing the Boys and Girls Club, you went through a lot  
16 of Board members. And I didn't really know what that  
17 meant. Did they quit or did you ask them to quit?

18 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Well, it's one of those --  
19 unfortunately, it's one of those situations where people  
20 come to the organization with essentially self interests.  
21 Many of them were members of other organizations, and they  
22 essentially in wanting to be involved with the Boys and  
23 Girls Club wanted to use the Boys and Girls Club to expand  
24 their organization, which is great and in many cases it  
25 worked out very well.

1           For instance, if you have sports clubs or helping  
2 children, all the different organizations that essentially  
3 the Boys and Girls Club can make a big umbrella over.  
4 That was wonderful and that was really part of what I was  
5 looking for in the organization.

6           But certain individuals did come in there with  
7 the idea that somehow or another this was going to be to  
8 their advantage, their personal advantage to be involved  
9 with this and wanted to steer the goals of the  
10 organization to benefit them specifically and forgot that  
11 what we're really there for is to serve the kids and not  
12 just the needy kids, but all of them. Certainly going to  
13 focus on making good citizens, but also for having just a  
14 place for kids to come and be part of a community.

15           I think that was -- it was challenging, because  
16 some people think that their organization individually  
17 could do that and we should just get behind them. And you  
18 try to keep them there. You try to keep them involved.  
19 But if they're not willing to contribute more than they  
20 want to take back out, then they have to make the  
21 decisions as to whether or not that's where they need to  
22 be, and many did.

23           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Do you still aspire to  
24 hold political office?

25           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Heck no.

1           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It's out of your blood  
2 now?

3           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: It was out of my blood -- I  
4 got to tell you, being a candidate was one of the most  
5 exciting and enjoyable times of my life. And it was  
6 stressful, because you realize ultimately that when you do  
7 get elected, again, you're only going to be one person and  
8 you have to work with these other people. And in doing  
9 that, you're going to have to limit what you're doing and  
10 who you're doing it with, even going to lunch with certain  
11 individuals.

12           Particularly in my profession and in my  
13 community, I had to make promises that, if elected, I  
14 would not work within my community. And that's a really  
15 tough thing to do. And certainly 30 years in practice  
16 you're limiting not only who you're going to do business  
17 with but who your friends are. And so essentially at this  
18 point, I was willing to let that go. I saw other people  
19 coming up through the ranks that are going to do an  
20 excellent job and I'll back them.

21           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You talked a little bit  
22 about your wife being an immigrant from Germany. I'm  
23 wondering what you learned, if anything, from what she  
24 told you about her experience as a non-English speaking  
25 immigrant and what you know would shape or influence your

1 role as a Commissioner?

2 MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Certainly does. I love  
3 listening to her stories. She was born May 21st, 1944,  
4 two weeks before D Day. Her mother basically after she  
5 was born buried her wedding ring in a hole somewhere in  
6 Poland and headed for Germany because the Russians were  
7 coming.

8 She essentially -- her father was a member of the  
9 Luftwaffe, was a fighter pilot for the Luftwaffe.  
10 Fantastic individual. Talking to him was just such a  
11 treat. I'm a pilot also, so his experiences in that ME  
12 109 were fantastic to listen to.

13 But ultimately, in post-war Germany growing up,  
14 she remembers one thing and she'll tell you this is one of  
15 the biggest things that the children would all say how we  
16 say, "Well, my dad can lift a house." Well, their term  
17 was, "My dad's an MP." And that essentially was something  
18 that gave them a higher level. So they all said, "Well,  
19 my dad is an MP."

20 And they all identified with the Americans. And  
21 America was someplace fantastic. And her father went  
22 through school. Her father was over here picking beans  
23 for two years in North Carolina -- I don't know the exact  
24 place -- as a POW. And basically was repatriated. He  
25 went through school and immigrated first to Canada. They

1 had -- my wife's family -- her mother had two other  
2 children, one born in Germany, one born in Canada. They  
3 both live in the United States now and they're both  
4 essentially green card. They never got their citizenship.

5           My wife went on to become naturalized. She  
6 wanted to be Supreme Court justice but didn't quite make  
7 it that far. She married me instead.

8           But the concept of language, she came over here  
9 and they didn't -- at the time, they didn't teach them  
10 English. They dropped her in a classroom and basically  
11 said, here, just Ms. Pearl will show you the rooms. She  
12 knew "bubble gum." That was the first word she knew the  
13 first day. And they would walk around and they would  
14 listen to them talk. But at the end of each sentence when  
15 they were talking to her, trying to explain something to  
16 her in English, they would say "understand?" And she  
17 would nod her head. To the extent where ultimately she  
18 decided in the English language you finish every sentence  
19 with, "Do you understand?" And so those are the kind of  
20 premises that we deal with now.

21           And she tried to teach me German. She's fluent  
22 in German. There isn't a chance I can learn German.  
23 That's a tough language.

24           And my daughter had six years of Spanish. I  
25 always hoped she'd go into the State Department or

1 something. But she has six years of Spanish. And I used  
2 to drag her down into Mexico when we would restore these  
3 motorcycles and we used to go down to Mexico and I'd drag  
4 her into the back areas of Mexico and make her speak  
5 Spanish just so I could be there and watch the negotiation  
6 and see how it worked. It was a great experience to do  
7 that.

8 But the whole concept of language and trying to  
9 learn languages, I know the basic rudamentaries of Spanish  
10 to get me in and out of a bar in Mexico, but our  
11 opportunities up here to -- all the different languages  
12 that we have in California and all the people with all of  
13 the ideas that are hidden behind those languages that need  
14 to be brought out into the light by getting them out of  
15 it, using a common language as a place to focus it all.  
16 But basically being able to pull those ideas out of those  
17 corners by engaging the people that English is not their  
18 first language is really important. It's really something  
19 I'm looking forward to. And it's part of this process is  
20 why I was speaking about interpreters and translators to  
21 invite people to be in there, because we'll certainly be  
22 in different regions that are predominantly non-native  
23 speaking.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What kind of traits or  
25 characteristics would you like to see in all of your

1 fellow Commissioners?

2           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Desire to get the job done  
3 right. And essentially the overall desire, overwhelming  
4 desire to make California the best it can be.

5           I don't know what other traits -- we're all going  
6 to bring hopefully different qualities to the table and  
7 we'll find out what those are and utilize each one  
8 individually.

9           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How do you think minority  
10 communities will be affected by the Commission's work?

11          MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Well, hopefully they will be  
12 becoming engaged in the process. Now, minority community  
13 as such -- in ten years, by 2050, white Caucasian males  
14 are going to be where they are now, but we're going to be  
15 a minority.

16          But the concept of creating districts and  
17 starting a process, because this is the first Commission  
18 and every ten years we're going to have a new Commission.  
19 So by 2050, I hope that essentially we have districts that  
20 give every ethnic racial sector the opportunity to be  
21 involved and not really be considered a minority because  
22 your voice is going to be just as important as anybody  
23 else's, albeit the numbers might not be the same.

24          But the desires of all the communities are the  
25 same. One of my best friend, Jiles Smith, is an Equal



1 Community Commissioners. He goes there. He's black. But  
2 he goes in there with the concept that you know, I'm here  
3 as a representative for equal opportunities, not just  
4 black people, but everybody. And he says he gets very  
5 frustrated when other individuals, black, white, hispanic,  
6 asian come in there and they want to represent their  
7 community rather than looking for equal opportunities.  
8 And he's said that to me over and over again.

9           We solve the world's problems over a beer couple  
10 times a year. So we never take notes though, so we forget  
11 what those solutions are.

12           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I have one last question.  
13 What part of your work with the Boys and Girl Club touched  
14 you or affected you the most?

15           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: A young man by the name of  
16 Angel who wanted to be an architect. And I was doing an  
17 addition on the club and the director brought him to me  
18 and said, "Angel wants to be an architect." I said, "Oh,  
19 cool. You'll be my on-site representative."

20           And so every time I went out there, we'd roll out  
21 the plans and Angel would follow me around and I'd show  
22 him the plans and show him. And he was interested. He  
23 was a good artist. So I would give him assignments. It  
24 was kind of fun. Here, draw this. Do this. What do you  
25 think about this?

1           And one day I got a phone call, and Angel had  
2 borrowed his mother's car and went down to get an ice  
3 cream cone and flipped his car -- flipped her car in a  
4 dirt road and was killed.

5           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I'm sorry.

6           MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: We missed that opportunity.  
7 If he had been at the club -- we needed ice cream at the  
8 club.

9           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you for sharing. I  
10 don't have any follow-up questions, if anyone else does.

11          VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Neither do I.

12          CHAIR AHMADI: Neither do I.

13          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Would you like to make a  
14 closing statement? We've got about eleven minutes.

15          MR. SEAGONDOLLAR: Whether I'm chosen or not, you  
16 guys are doing what I believe is the most important work  
17 at this time that this state has. We have to get this  
18 taken care of so that we have representation across the  
19 state. And they've got to get people registered and  
20 voting so that we know that minorities aren't minorities.  
21 They're part of the whole voice.

22          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you so much for  
23 coming to see us.

24          VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you

25          CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, sir.

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Let's recess until 2:44.

2

3 (Whereupon there was a short recess)

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1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Let's go back on record.

2 It's 12:44 -- 2:44. I'm sorry.

3 As I indicated to you during the break, it's  
4 possible that Ms. Spano's assistant will be asking you  
5 questions during her portion of the interview, and that is  
6 entirely consistent with our regulations, so please don't  
7 be rattled if she has to leave. She isn't feeling well.

8 Are you ready to begin, Mr. Afflerbach?

9 MR. AFFLERBACH: Yes, I am.

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Wonderful. Start the  
11 time.

12 Our first standard question: What specific  
13 skills do you believe a good Commissioner should possess?  
14 Of those skills, which do you possess? Which do you not  
15 possess and how will you compensate for it? Is there  
16 anything in your life that would prohibit or impair your  
17 ability to perform all of the duties of a Commissioner?

18 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, from start to finish, the  
19 Commission's work is going to be about people. We're  
20 drawing a map for the people and we're going to be dealing  
21 with people on the Commission and the public.

22 And my career as a journalist has been dealing  
23 with people. Every story we do is about people. That's  
24 what people want to see. So I bring the skills of dealing  
25 with people that would be very helpful on the Commission.

1 And I'm talking about listening, expressing ideas,  
2 communicating, negotiations, diplomacy, a lot of patience,  
3 too.

4           And one good part of that communication skills  
5 that I have is written communication skills. I'm a good  
6 writer, and I guess the fact that I'm here before you now  
7 would indicate that I wrote a pretty good application.

8           Everyone wants problem solvers on this  
9 Commission, because we've got a problem, which is writing  
10 a map, right? And then writing a report that goes with  
11 it.

12           Along the way there's going to be problems that  
13 have to be solved. And the same in journalism, you start  
14 with the problem of how do you create a story. And then  
15 you go along the way, put that story together and meet a  
16 deadline, get that job done.

17           Now, another skill, another talent that the  
18 Commissioner is going to have to have is a good knowledge  
19 of the state of California. It's going to take  
20 understanding of the people, the politics, the geography,  
21 of course, and the history. And California has been my  
22 beat in the news business for 25 years. I know the state.  
23 I can draw on that information in drawing the map.

24           Also, it's going to take an open mind and a thick  
25 skin, because there will be critics out there. We know

1 that. Already there is a proposition to repeal this. And  
2 we'll talk about that later.

3           So in journalism, every story that we do is a  
4 public record literally and we have to stand by it. We  
5 have to take the criticism. And more important, we have  
6 to get it right so the critics are wrong and we're right.  
7 So those are some of the pluses that I bring.

8           Now I will admit, I'm not an attorney and I'm not  
9 going to get a degree before the Commission finishes its  
10 work and probably not after either. But there will be  
11 legal counsel who is wonderfully versed in the Voting  
12 Rights Act. And that's part of the law.

13           Also there's a good chance that we will have an  
14 attorney or two on the Commission and I would welcome  
15 that. I draw on these skills as well. But I really don't  
16 have to have a law degree to read the law, understand what  
17 it says, and apply that. So I think I have the  
18 intelligence and the training to interpret the law as it's  
19 meant.

20           In fact, there's always the question about my  
21 analytical skills. It's true I'm not a computer program  
22 err. I've not used GIS programming. And I'm not going to  
23 write the program that draws a map. But I can learn that  
24 program. And I can find experts, bring them in who can  
25 teach me how to do that, help me with it. Right now

1 you're putting together a panel, getting the most talented  
2 people you can get on this Commission, and it could be a  
3 mistake not to take advantage of all those skills,  
4 especially if I don't have them.

5           So I think the last part of the question: Is  
6 there anything that would impair my ability to perform?  
7 And I guess the short answer is no. My time is my own.  
8 I'm in good health. I've kept my calendar open just in  
9 anticipation of being here and for the future. And I'm a  
10 journalist used to living out of a suitcase. I can handle  
11 that. And I like to work until the job is done.

12           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Very good.

13           Describe a circumstance from your personal  
14 experience where you had to work with others to resolve a  
15 conflict or difference of opinion. Please describe the  
16 issue and explain your role in addressing and revolving  
17 the conflict. If you are selected to serve on the  
18 Citizen's Redistricting Commission, tell us how you would  
19 resolve conflicts that may arise among the Commissioners.

20           MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, a lot of the work I do as  
21 a news producer is conflict management.

22           And I will talk about a case that happened three  
23 years ago, 2007. It was actually August. And it was in  
24 Utah. There was a cave-in at a coal mine, and it was --  
25 there was six minors who were trapped and it was a

1 national news story. There was a big rescue effort. I  
2 went in as part of a team of two dozen journalists with  
3 CNN. And my job was what we call the unit manager or the  
4 site supervisor, which meant I had to make sure that every  
5 thing got done right. We had to be on top of the story.  
6 We had to know what was happening, what was coming next.  
7 And I also had to schedule crews of reporters and  
8 producers and engineers and camera men. And in the news  
9 business, there are some pretty strong personalities. And  
10 I will admit that. But that's really not the conflict  
11 that I want to talk about.

12           The conflict was we were a group of outsiders who  
13 had descended on this tiny little mining town, this  
14 community of interest, if you will, and they were in the  
15 middle of a terrible tragedy.

16           So on top of all this, there was a second cave-in  
17 and three of the rescuers were killed trying to save their  
18 friends. So that meant there's going to be a funeral.  
19 And that meant it was my job to secure the coverage for  
20 the network because it was a national story.

21           So I went to the pastor who's going to perform  
22 the funeral. He was the brother-in-law of the minor who  
23 was killed. It was his funeral. And the pastor sent me  
24 to talk to the sheriff. And now, the sheriff, LaMar  
25 Guymon, had been in office for 25 years. It was still



1 fresh in his mind another mine disaster from two decades  
2 before when the media had invaded the funeral services for  
3 the dead minors and just disrupted it. He made it  
4 perfectly clear to me this was not going to happen this  
5 time.

6           So what I had to do was offer a deal, if you  
7 will, a solution to the sheriff, which was we would  
8 provide one camera and this would be a media pool that all  
9 the networks, all the stations would share. One  
10 inconspicuous camera to televise the funeral and no other  
11 journalist would come in. So the sheriff said, "Okay, if  
12 you can enforce that, I will accept it."

13           So then I had to go back to my network, my  
14 bosses, and the other networks, the competition and say,  
15 okay, this is the deal. This is all we can get and we're  
16 lucky to have it.

17           So that's what took place. And the rest was just  
18 the logistics, making sure that we did right and respected  
19 the family, which we did.

20           And I guess you could say we really shouldn't  
21 have been there in the first place, but I will tell you  
22 that after the funeral the family came to me and thanked  
23 me for being there, because to them, that minor had been a  
24 hero. He was their father, their brother, their husband.  
25 And they wanted the rest of the world to know that story.

1           And the sheriff, he expressed his compliments as  
2 well and told me that next time I'm in town on a better  
3 day he'd take me fishing.

4           So obviously on the Commission, because of the  
5 open meetings requirement of Bagley-Keene, I can't go from  
6 one Commissioner to another saying, well, here's what this  
7 person needs. This one wants that. That's a serial  
8 meeting from what I've read and that's covered by the law.  
9 But being out in the open will actually help I think,  
10 because when everyone's concerns and needs are out in the  
11 open, then you can get to a better understanding.

12           So I would use the same respect that I tried to  
13 use for the people I was dealing with, use that on the  
14 Commission, make sure each and every person is heard. And  
15 then we decide what we have to decide. If there's areas  
16 of agreement, that's less we have to decide.

17           But finally, I would make sure that we sat down  
18 and hammered out that agreement on this Commission,  
19 because that is the whole point of why we're here and  
20 anything less would just be a failure.

21           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
22 work impact the state? Which of these impacts will  
23 improve the state the most? Is there any potential for  
24 the Commission's work to harm the state? And if so, in  
25 what ways?

1           MR. AFFLERBACH: I asked myself this question in  
2 2008 when I read my ballot pamphlet. And it's there in  
3 the text. It says that the purpose, the impact of this  
4 Prop. 11 is to ensure fair representation. So that's the  
5 best impact that any of us to hope for us to make it fair.  
6 Now, the map itself that we draw, that's going to be an  
7 impact of itself on. And it's going to last for ten years  
8 and it might be a guide for the next redistricting  
9 Commission I would hope. But beyond the map, the way we  
10 get to that map is also going to be a guide. It's going  
11 to be a big impact on the state if we can get it right,  
12 make it fair and make people believe in it, then that's  
13 going to be a great impact on the state.

14           So the second half of the question was what kind  
15 of --

16           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Is there potential for the  
17 Commission's work to harm the state? And if so, in what  
18 ways?

19           MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, there is an argument that  
20 says this will harm the state just by doing it. It should  
21 be repealed. And the argument says that the state is  
22 already in a stalemate, nothing gets done. And if we make  
23 every district competitive, every vote will be a  
24 battleground and we'll institutionalize a stalemate.

25           Okay. So my answer to that is, first of all, I

1 admit I'm a Democrat and I've been a Democrat all my life.  
2 And I also live in the Bay Area, which means that I don't  
3 have anything against incumbents. But the law itself says  
4 that incumbents are not allowed to draw their own  
5 districts. So that's a principle that I agree with. So  
6 again, my answer is when we draw a map, it will be a fair,  
7 honest map. And whoever is a good candidate has a fair  
8 chance to win and that would include the incumbent. So  
9 they have to run somewhere and if they're a good  
10 candidate, they should win.

11           There is another impact that I'd like to mention,  
12 which has to do with the federal government that will be  
13 watching everything we do. We are still under the  
14 pre-clearance requirement of the Voting Rights Act. So I  
15 hope that our impact on that record is a positive one. We  
16 can't get the counties that are under pre-clearance to  
17 bail out just by the work we do. But it could be one step  
18 towards California getting out of the stigma that we're  
19 undertaking the Voting Rights Act.

20           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where  
21 you've had to work as part of a group to achieve a common  
22 goal. Tell us about the goal, describe your role within  
23 the group, and tell us how the group worked or did not  
24 work collaboratively to achieve this goal.

25           If you are selected to serve on the Citizen's

1 Redistricting Commission, tell us what you would do to  
2 foster collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure  
3 the Commission meets its legal deadlines.

4           MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, I think I've explained it.  
5 Working in journalism, what we do is working together to  
6 achieve a common goal. So sometimes I have to work with  
7 people I've never worked with before. Particularly in the  
8 freelance world I'm working in now, you don't know which  
9 crew you're going to work with or which reporter from one  
10 assignment to the next.

11           But going back to a couple of winters ago, I was  
12 paired with a reporter from Chicago who came out in the  
13 winter and she was used to snow. She was from Chicago.  
14 But she had not been up to the Donnor Summit during a  
15 blizzard and that's where we had to go.

16           So I gave her a very quick course in the climate  
17 patterns, the geography that causes those climate  
18 patterns, the affects it has on the state with water and  
19 little bit of history about the Donnor party. So she put  
20 all of that together into a nice concise report, presented  
21 it to a national audience while the snow was falling. So  
22 that was some collaboration.

23           Meanwhile, during the storm, the Truckee River  
24 caused a flash flood down in Nevada way past Reno in the  
25 city of Fernley. So off we go to cover breaking news. So

1 I take the crew down there and the reporter. We get the  
2 story. We're driving back because we have to get to our  
3 satellite truck to meet our deadline --

4 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

5 MR. AFFLERBACH: So there is a jack-knifed big  
6 rig. We can't get through. So I work with the reporter.  
7 She writes the script in the car. Had to get it into to  
8 be approved by the producer at headquarters. And the  
9 camera man, he uploads the footage by cell phone over the  
10 Internet so we can meet our deadline.

11 So those are the kind of straights that I use  
12 where each person contributed what they can and everybody  
13 pitches in. And that's going to work on the Commission,  
14 I'm sure. And I also find that when collaboration starts,  
15 it's kind of contagious and it spreads and everybody works  
16 together.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
18 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
19 from all over California who come from very different  
20 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you are  
21 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the  
22 specific skills you possess that will make you effective  
23 at interacting with the public.

24 MR. AFFLERBACH: Sounds kind of like a  
25 journalist. So let me talk about my work with the Census

1 Bureau. I spent six weeks knocking on doors, interviewing  
2 people, and it was a broad cross section of different age  
3 groups and races and ethnic groups and all that. And I  
4 was pretty good at it, because my crew leader started  
5 giving me the tougher assignments, the ones that the other  
6 enumerators couldn't get people to talk.

7           And it's not easy going up to a hostile person  
8 saying, you know, "I'm from the government and I have some  
9 questions to ask." But what I found was if I could keep  
10 that door open, you know, the physical but also  
11 metaphorically speaking, then the communication could  
12 begin. And that's what I worked for.

13           So I can't really go door to door on this  
14 Commission asking people you know what kind of district do  
15 you want, although it might not be a bad idea, because  
16 there has to be some sort of outreach to the public so  
17 they know what they're doing.

18           That's where the journalism comes in. I know how  
19 to put together a media campaign. I know press releases,  
20 press conferences. I know how to reach the members of the  
21 media, get them interested in the story. So that's how I  
22 would reach out to the public in order to do it in an  
23 immediate fashion and make sure that we're ready for  
24 something that's got to be done.

25           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi, your 20

1 minutes.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you.

3 So you already told me that you're not a lawyer.

4 The first question I'd like you to answer is -- I'm going  
5 to read the question. It's somewhat long. But please ask  
6 me to repeat it if you need to.

7 It looks like you have worked pretty  
8 independently and with latitude to make your own  
9 decisions. How do you feel about working within the  
10 confines of a group following the specific guidelines and  
11 laws in reaching consensus with your colleagues on just  
12 about every major decision on redistricting?

13 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, I don't mind following the  
14 rules. I understand why the rules are there, what they're  
15 for, and how to apply them.

16 And I do like to do my own work, but I certainly  
17 know how to work with others. In fact, that's why I got  
18 the assignments to work with people who I never worked  
19 with before, because I knew how to get in there, build  
20 that team, work together, and agree on things. I would  
21 present my idea of how the story should go and I would try  
22 to get that done. I would work with it.

23 But as a producer, it's not my name. It's not my  
24 face on the story. The reporter, he's going to have final  
25 word when he puts his name on the end of that piece. And



1 he's also got to defer to an executive producer who's  
2 willing to say, well, do you have your facts right?

3           So in terms of following a strict guideline, we  
4 have those, truth, accuracy, a couple of those. And the  
5 rest, we cooperate because nobody can do it alone. And  
6 that's -- I know I can't do this job alone.

7           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Are you done?

8           MR. AFFLERBACH: Yes.

9           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

10          Could you please tell me a little more about your  
11 vision how your work as a media consultant will help our  
12 enhance the Commission's work?

13          MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, I guess I would be -- I  
14 would be the person that could answer the questions of how  
15 do we do this. There's going to be times when we have to  
16 create a message, present it the right way, get it right.  
17 And there's going to be a time when we're going to be  
18 criticized, we have to react to it.

19          So when you say media consultant, I would consult  
20 with the Commission and say here's the way it looks.  
21 Here's what people think. Here's how we can make them  
22 understand. Now, there's various media consultants who do  
23 it professionally, but I know we're not talking about  
24 that.

25          I'm talking about using my expertise in what a

1 press conference looks like. This alone is a major  
2 operation, and it's got to be up and running from day one,  
3 you know. We've got to find people to do it. We've got  
4 to know, hey, people are going to sit are and have  
5 microphones. We can find somebody to do that, but I would  
6 want to make sure they get it right and check with me if  
7 they're wrong.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, sir.

9 So what does the phrase "partisan gerrymander"  
10 mean to you? How would this concept affect your decisions  
11 when drawing the lines and why?

12 MR. AFFLERBACH: A partisan gerrymander is one  
13 that's defined to pick only the people that will vote the  
14 way you want. You're partisan and you've created this odd  
15 shaped district which it is geographically contiguous  
16 which is about your only defense.

17 And how it would effect my decisions on the  
18 Commission?

19 Could you repeat the second half?

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure. Let me just read the  
21 question again.

22 What does the phrase "partisan gerrymander" mean  
23 to you? How would this concept affect your decision when  
24 redrawing the lines? And why?

25 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, I would hope to avoid it,

1 because they're both -- partisan is not what we're after.  
2 We're trying to prevent -- we're actually prohibited by  
3 the law from drawing according to party choices. That's  
4 partisan to me.

5 And then I would also avoid the appearance of a  
6 gerrymander, because that calls into question everything  
7 that we've done, the accuracy of the demographics, who  
8 we're trying to favor.

9 So I think it's a concept that I would avoid and  
10 I would -- if someone thought that our districts looked  
11 like partisan gerrymanders, I would have a very strong  
12 case in the document with the map explaining this is not a  
13 partisan gerrymander. This is the communities of interest  
14 that we've put together to create a real solid district  
15 within the framework of the Federal Voting Rights Act,  
16 which will in some cases -- instruct us that we do have to  
17 include certain language groups or other communities of  
18 interest and then it would also have to be within the  
19 other restrictions in the Voter First Act.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, sir.

21 You mentioned communities of interest. I'm sure  
22 that you understand that should be a major focus. Can you  
23 share with me your ideas about some of the challenges  
24 associated with defining those communities?

25 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, they aren't specifically

1 defined under Prop. 11. And if Prop. 20 passes, there's a  
2 definition in there and we'll cross that bridge when the  
3 voters come to it.

4           So communities of interest, they are groups that  
5 share common values or common concerns. And it could be a  
6 community of interest regarding the building of the  
7 Caldecott Tunnel back in the Bay Area where I live. Or it  
8 could be a community regarding the foreclosures that are  
9 happening in one of the suburbs.

10           So defining a community of interest is up to the  
11 people in it. They've got to come to us and they've got  
12 to tell us, well, this is what we are interested in. And  
13 you need to do something about it. And if we hear them,  
14 we can see if it's a valid claim and we will consider how  
15 that community fits into a coherent district.

16           And the other thing about communities of interest  
17 I'm still trying to work out is what happens when there  
18 are two interests conflicting within the same community?  
19 How do you decide if there is a group that speaks a  
20 certain language and half of them are interested in -- or  
21 they work at a certain job and the others do. Because  
22 economic interests as a community, language. So again  
23 it's a balancing act and you'd have to look at the  
24 numbers, the people, and how important each interest is to  
25 that group.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, sir.

2 I don't have any other questions.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho, would you  
4 like to start your 20-minute question period?

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Sure. Mr. Afflerbach,  
6 is that right?

7 MR. AFFLERBACH: Yes.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You have been a  
9 production manager -- a unit manager at your job. With  
10 all that experience, would you see yourself as a  
11 spokesperson for the Commission or would your role likely  
12 focus on other responsibilities?

13 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, believe it or not, I don't  
14 really like to appear in front of the camera. But I think  
15 my responsibilities would be whatever was needed. I think  
16 that every Commissioner can speak for themselves. When we  
17 come to a point where we need someone to speak up, we can  
18 decide. I'm not volunteering and I'm not turning down any  
19 requests. I think we'll just have to wait and see who  
20 wants to take that on.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. You kind of  
22 gave us a little bit about journalistic ethics. Can you  
23 tell me whether your role as a journalist or retired  
24 journalist -- you're not retired just yet?

25 MR. AFFLERBACH: Freelance. We call that

1 freelance.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. Would create  
3 any conflict for you as a Commissioner? And do you stand  
4 to benefit financially or professionally if named  
5 Commissioner?

6 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, I can't see how I would  
7 benefit in my work as a journalist if I'm on the  
8 Commission, because I would be working for the Commission  
9 and I wouldn't be working as a journalist. I couldn't do  
10 that.

11 And in terms -- could you please repeat the first  
12 question? The first part of the question?

13 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No problem.

14 Whether your role as a journalist or retired  
15 Journalist would create any conflict for you as a  
16 Commissioner? And do you stand to benefit financially or  
17 professional if named Commissioner?

18 MR. AFFLERBACH: So the conflict of interest,  
19 well, all right, there could be a meeting and a reporter I  
20 know that I've worked with is going to stand up and say,  
21 "Hey, Chuck, why don't you tell me this?" Or they might  
22 call me up at night and say, "Hey, tell me what's going on  
23 there." I can draw the line and they know I can draw the  
24 line. And any journalist knows how to dig for the  
25 information and I know how they're going to try to do it.

1           So I don't see a conflict of interest there,  
2 because I would be working, committed to being a  
3 Commissioner. And the journalism would take -- would be  
4 on the backburner until the Commission was over.

5           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Since you know a lot  
6 of individuals in the journalist profession and you kind  
7 of gave us a little bit of insight, would you be -- I'm  
8 not sure if you socialize with these individuals. Would  
9 you be socializing with these individuals if you were a  
10 Commissioner and what do you expect at those instances?  
11 What would occur?

12           MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, I do still have good  
13 friends in the media and I do socialize with them on  
14 occasion. But I think that they would understand as much  
15 as I do that there's things that are off the record and I  
16 also mean things that just I can't talk about.

17           And if it becomes an issue, if they want to put  
18 our friendship on the line in their effort to get the  
19 inside story on the Commission, well, you know, that would  
20 be the end of the friendship and that's all I can say.  
21 And I don't think the friends that I socialize with would  
22 actually do that.

23           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. You were  
24 talking about the work that you did for the Census Bureau.  
25 How would your work for that Census Bureau and what you

1 learned from that shape your approach to redistricting?

2           MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, I guess I have a pretty  
3 good idea of how that little dot on the map got there,  
4 because I sort of put it there. And I know the questions  
5 that we asked, and I know what kind of work went into  
6 making that as accurate as possible. And it was people  
7 who were committed. And they would send us back again and  
8 again, because we only answered four out of six questions.  
9 At first that was, okay. And then it was, no, go back.  
10 We have to know what race they choose or how old they are.  
11 So we irritated a lot of people. More than one person  
12 said I was harassing them. But I was doing my job and I  
13 was doing it for a good cause.

14           So I think that would be pretty good insight when  
15 we get the demographics and we say how many of this race  
16 or how many people of this age and I can relate it to what  
17 I did and I can think, well, I've got to trust it, because  
18 we all took an oath and we did the best we could. And  
19 it's been checked and double-checked. They're still  
20 checking it. I go by Starbucks and they're still out  
21 there, the census workers. And they've got more  
22 questionnaires. And they're doing the quality control.

23           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What skills do you  
24 possess that are critical to the objectives of the  
25 Commission?



1           MR. AFFLERBACH: Critical, well, I'm as fair and  
2 honest as I can be. I think that's true. And I certainly  
3 hope it's true. That's very important. And in terms of  
4 critical to the Commission, I always work towards a  
5 consensus and sometimes the role is peace maker and  
6 sometimes the role is knocking heads together.

7           But I like to get the job finished and I like to  
8 do things right. I work hard and I do a lot of homework  
9 because I want to know when I go in what's got to be done,  
10 how it's got to be done. So I think it's critical that  
11 everybody on the Commission is committed to getting that  
12 map done.

13          VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So when you're saying  
14 that one of the critical skills that you possess is your  
15 commitment, so that would include -- from our training,  
16 we've learned that the Commission could take numerous  
17 hours and a lot of an individual's time. Is that type of  
18 the commitment that you're willing to provide as a  
19 Commissioner?

20          MR. AFFLERBACH: Oh, yeah, I've got no problem  
21 working long hours. In fact, I know that this job is  
22 going to be a full time job. It's going to start -- it  
23 should start before the lottery for the first eight  
24 Commissioners is even held. Because those Commissioners  
25 who are chosen are going to have to then find out right

1 away who's left in the pool so they can pick the next six.  
2 I personally I would do my homework before my name was  
3 drawn. I would want a good idea of when was left to round  
4 it out.

5           Because if you look at the schedule, there's no  
6 time to waste. This is going to be full time right from  
7 the start. You know, you've got a schedule your first  
8 meeting. Give 14 days notice and learn how to run these  
9 meetings.

10           And I really applaud the auditor's recommendation  
11 that the Commissioners have a crash course in the  
12 Bagley-Keene Act, Roberts Rules of Order, the Voting  
13 Rights Act. We should get a crash course in GIS mapping  
14 too. I would be looking forward to that. Because they  
15 have no time to waste, whoever is on the Commission.

16           And then on election day, if this Prop. 20  
17 passes, it's going to be even more work, because it's  
18 going to add a fourth set of maps to the work that the  
19 Commission's got to do. And you know, these aren't just  
20 one more set of districts. These are even smaller  
21 districts and the legislative districts, they're designed  
22 to fit one inside another. Two assembly districts net  
23 inside a Senate district and then you take ten Senate  
24 districts to combine into a Board of equalization  
25 district. So that has a logic and there is a progression.

1 But we don't even know how many of the Congressional  
2 districts would be drawn, because that information hasn't  
3 even come out until December.

4 And the actual census data doesn't even come out  
5 until March. So there is a whole other wrinkle there.  
6 And that's just to make the point that I know how much  
7 work it's going to be.

8 And just to add the kicker, if Prop. 20 passes,  
9 it moves the deadline up a month. It's no longer going to  
10 be September the 15th when all four sets of maps have to  
11 be drawn. It's August 15th. So boom, we just lost  
12 another month and got 33 percent more work to do. So no  
13 fooling. I work overtime to get it done.

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: When you were talking  
15 about having the first eight selected by random and then  
16 having to select the individuals, what would you look at  
17 if you were one of the randomly selected individuals?  
18 What would you look at the or individuals to round out  
19 your group?

20 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, not to be facetious, but I  
21 would first look for people who weren't like me. I think  
22 the more diverse, the better. I think that's the point.  
23 So I would definitely want people who had skills that  
24 maybe I was lacking, people who came from places I'm not  
25 from.

1           And you know, people who more than anything I  
2   thought looked like good, strong, fair Commissioners,  
3   people who could explain themselves well and had the  
4   proper credentials. So that's what I'd be looking for.  
5   And I want to have a good idea of who those people were so  
6   that I had recommendations as soon as we got a chance to  
7   start picking people.

8           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. If you were  
9   directing the Commission activities, what would your  
10   priorities be for the first 60 days?

11          MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, we mentioned just getting  
12   up and running, making sure that we got the open meetings  
13   in place, that we know what we're doing, how to run the  
14   opening meeting, that we give them the proper notice and  
15   all the infrastructure to hold it is taking place.

16          I think sometimes the first thing on the agenda  
17   is making the agenda. So bring the Commissioners together  
18   and we all decide what do we want to do first? What are  
19   the first steps to get to the end? So we won't have the  
20   exact data until March, so that's not quite 60 days. But  
21   we can start looking at some of the state's data. You  
22   know, there is the State Department of Finance has a  
23   wealth of information, I understand. And we have the  
24   access to it according to the law.

25          So we could start looking at what we're going to

1 look at and get our schedule in place so that we know  
2 where we're going to take our traveling road show, if you  
3 will, and at least we'll have a place to get started and  
4 find out how it works.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That was  
6 my last question.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good afternoon.

9 MR. AFFLERBACH: Good afternoon.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How would the issues you  
11 learned from a reporting perspective such as issues you  
12 covered for same-sex marriage, religious and politics  
13 impact your viewpoint and decision making as a  
14 Commissioner?

15 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, they're all people. And I  
16 have covered for starters the same-sex marriage issue for  
17 my entire career. It started in the Castro, and it's  
18 become a national movement. And I think that everybody  
19 has got their rights. And I protect those. That's what  
20 voting is all about.

21 I did cover the weddings at City Hall and was a  
22 very moving experience. And I covered the California  
23 Supreme Court hearings. I sat and listened to the  
24 arguments on both sides when the proposition was first  
25 upheld. Now, it's all being hashed out in the courts.

1           But that issue to me is not really a voting  
2 rights issue. I think the marriage issue is separate and  
3 I hope that that is resolved. And I have my opinion on  
4 that.

5           But I will say that if you try to draw a district  
6 line down the middle of Castro Street and put that  
7 community in two different districts, you'll find out  
8 about a community of interest real fast. So I think that  
9 should be respected.

10          Other political issues, well, there is politics  
11 and there's questions and sometimes you don't know which  
12 is which. So you have to just look at what's underlying  
13 why they vote the way they do, who they vote for. So you  
14 don't look at who the politicians are they've chosen; you  
15 look at what their needs and their fears and their wants  
16 are.

17          PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you find it -- do you  
18 think it would be difficult for you to set aside your  
19 personal opinions on such strong matters as same-sex  
20 marriage if they were presented to you in a community of  
21 interest meeting?

22          MR. AFFLERBACH: No. No. I have set aside  
23 strong feelings in many situations, probably more strong  
24 than a Commission hearing will be. And I don't think  
25 anticipate any problem doing that. I might grit my teeth

1 and I will still abide by the majority rule as it's  
2 written into this law.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How comfortable are you with  
4 the task of making decisions about reintroducing political  
5 boundaries? Because I know you've report -- from a  
6 reporter's perspective, you've gathered the facts and  
7 reported the facts on both sides of the issue. This time  
8 you're going to be in a decision-making role.

9 MR. AFFLERBACH: I do see the difference. You  
10 know, it's real easy to say he said-she said, let the  
11 viewer decide. In this case, I get to decide. Me and a  
12 few other good friends. So I would be comfortable with  
13 that.

14 I decide every time I vote, and I try to persuade  
15 my wife and anybody else that will listen. So that's what  
16 I would do on the Commission.

17 And I certainly don't object to making a decision  
18 even on something as important as this. I think it would  
19 be an honor, and I would do it to the best of my ability.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How do you feel about the  
21 inclusion of communities of interest as a consideration in  
22 drawing district lines?

23 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, it makes sense. I think  
24 there -- well, in the federal law, there are certain past  
25 injustices that need to be addressed and re-dressed and I

1 have no objection to that.

2 I think that a community of interest is going to  
3 be a very nebulous concern when people start standing up  
4 and saying well, here's my community. I've got him right  
5 here and the two of us want this lot. But I think it's  
6 got to be considered in the priority that's listed in the  
7 law. You know, it really is the fourth one according to  
8 the way the law is written. You've got the Constitution.  
9 Then you've got the Federal Voting Rights Act. Then  
10 you've got geographic contiguous borders, which that  
11 should be a given with any district. So then you look at  
12 the community of interest. I think once you've got the  
13 basis, then you can see how do the people within that  
14 border actually work together.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I remember you mentioned  
16 earlier that you believe the people should come to you,  
17 the Commission, to express their viewpoint and their  
18 concerns. How would you feel -- would you conduct  
19 outreach in a rural area of citizens and voters that  
20 couldn't make it and go to these meetings and be present?

21 MR. AFFLERBACH: How would I reach out to them?

22 PANEL MEMBER: Yes.

23 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, it will take a campaign, a  
24 media campaign, if you will. That is one thing that I  
25 would encourage. And that is trying to get the story out.



1 Now, I don't think I joked about going door to door. I  
2 don't think there is a budget for that or that we can have  
3 the time to do that. But beyond -- there's television.  
4 There's the Internet. There's newspapers. There's  
5 word-of-mouth.

6 I think that would be the first steps in  
7 spreading the word. And that's the kind of community  
8 where if you can get one person interested, they're going  
9 to go and tell somebody else and you know, you could get  
10 pretty good turn-out of quite interested people.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. How do you feel about  
12 making decisions in the public and the transparent  
13 process?

14 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, that's going to be a  
15 challenge, because you know, it's going to be life in a  
16 fish bowl. And I'm ready to do it. I think that the  
17 decisions I make, although it's not my face that's been  
18 there on the air, it's decisions -- everything that's in  
19 that report is a decision I made. And I have to present  
20 it and say, here it is. I hope you like it. And if you  
21 don't, well, I did what I thought was right and good. So  
22 that's going to be the same thing. You know, it may make  
23 me nervous, but it's not going to scare me or back me off.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Are you comfortable with  
25 being scrutinized by the public and perhaps the media?

1           MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, kind of like this? This  
2 is probably pretty mild. But I'll go in and have done my  
3 homework. I'll be prepared. I'll have my facts in order  
4 and I'll make sure I know what I'm talking about.

5           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Redistricting is highly  
6 litigious. How do you feel about the legal system and  
7 lawsuits and will you be comfortable if named as a  
8 defendant in a lawsuit?

9           MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, the legal system how I  
10 feel about it is we need it. It works, maybe not as well  
11 as we'd like. But I don't have any problem with it. I  
12 think a lot of good has come from people standing up in  
13 court and demanding what should be done.

14           As far as me being involved in the lawsuit, well,  
15 I have been through a lot of trials as an observer and  
16 even been on a jury. But never been a defendant. And  
17 that would be a unique experience.

18           I'm prepared to do it, because that's why I'm  
19 here, because I want to get this done. And I'm glad I  
20 would have legal counsel, and I'm especially glad that the  
21 law allows the State Legislature to pay the cost of the  
22 defending the lawsuits.

23           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Why did you choose to reside  
24 in Oakland?

25           MR. AFFLERBACH: She's sitting back there.

1 (Laughter)

2 MR. AFFLERBACH: That was the reason why I moved  
3 to Oakland and that's the reason I've been there for 30  
4 years. And, boy, it's a great home.

5 You know, in my application I wrote I came from  
6 Texas. And you know, I've spent more time here in  
7 California than I have in Texas and my family is there.  
8 But I can't go back there. I wouldn't want to live there.  
9 Oakland is a home. There's a lot there. There's a lot of  
10 communities of interest right on my block. And I love it.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you get heavily involved  
12 in the --

13 MR. AFFLERBACH: On a local family basis. The  
14 granddaughters school, you know, I've been down there to  
15 put on the traffic vest and open car doors and help the  
16 kids get out. And we go to the fairs and pitch rings,  
17 bottles, that kind of thing. I like my neighborhood and  
18 my community and I keep up on what's going on.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: That's all I have. Thank  
20 you.

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. I have a few  
22 questions. But you may also have follow up questions.

23 Panelists, do you have follow-up questions you'd  
24 like to ask now?

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No. I don't have any.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I just have a couple  
3 questions for you, Mr. Afflerbach.

4 In your work as a journalist, have you reached  
5 any conclusions about the life experience of racial  
6 minority groups in the state as opposed to the life  
7 experience of the state's non-minority residents? And  
8 if so, what are those conclusions and how might they  
9 impact your work as a Commissioner?

10 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, there's my work as a  
11 journalist and there's my life in Oakland. And the one  
12 colors the other, because I know what a lot of racial  
13 minorities are up against in Oakland and in the rest of  
14 the state. My wife taught in Oakland public schools for  
15 20 years. So I know how hard it is when the kid comes to  
16 school and hasn't had breakfast or goes home and there's  
17 nobody there.

18 As a journalist, you know, I don't separate that.  
19 But I let them tell me tell the stories.

20 I actually worked for ABC the night that the  
21 verdict came in, the police shooting in the murder trial  
22 for the shooting of Oscar Grant. I was down there at city  
23 hall when the rally was going on for the whole night. And  
24 I saw the concern. I saw these young people who just felt  
25 there was no hope for them and they had been cheated or

1 whatever. But you know, I shot video. I listened to  
2 their complaints and then you know, they got out of hand.  
3 But that's it.

4           So those are the life expectations that I  
5 observed and you know, it's not just the African American  
6 racial groups. Hispanic -- in Oakland, every time there  
7 is a war, the refugees, the people who have been lost  
8 their homes, they come to Oakland. So we've got those  
9 neighborhoods all over Oakland; 80 languages spoken in  
10 Oakland. So they're there. And I see them. And I know  
11 about them. And so I want to consider what their concerns  
12 are.

13           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You talked a little bit  
14 about your work as a census -- for the Census and  
15 occasionally encountering the hostile individual. I  
16 wondered whether in either of your professional capacities  
17 you had to go into neighborhoods that you personally found  
18 intimidating and what that felt for you.

19           MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, sure, there's always  
20 intimidating neighborhoods and you don't go in alone.  
21 That's one of the rules in TV news. Fortunately, it takes  
22 a crew to go do it. So you know, you tread as lightly as  
23 carefully as you can. And you know, it's not -- it can be  
24 intimidating in that maybe it's a situation where there is  
25 a crime.

1           Maybe there is a grieving family that just you  
2 are intruding on their grief. So that's you know -- you  
3 still have to go and do the job.

4           And if you build a barrier, a professional  
5 facade, you go in and do it. And you know, I guess on a  
6 Commission, that's what I've got to do. I'm not going to  
7 be reaching out to everybody and accepting everything they  
8 say. I'm going to have to stay focused, analyze what  
9 they're saying, why they're saying it and then sort it  
10 out.

11           So that's I think journalism, the work I've done  
12 has helped me get those skills. And in being a  
13 professional, that's the best way I can describe it. Just  
14 being a professional.

15           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You talked a little bit  
16 about the -- you used the phrase the Commission could get  
17 it right. What does that mean for you?

18           MR. AFFLERBACH: Oh, it would be a beautiful map.  
19 It would be the map that everybody says, yeah, that works.  
20 I see where I vote and I see how I fit in and I see why  
21 these people are voting in my district and I see why these  
22 people aren't. I don't know what right is yet, because I  
23 haven't looked at the demographics.

24           I actually am looking forward to the map making.  
25 That's going to be fun. I'm kind of nerdy in that that I

1 like to sit down at the computer and move the lines and  
2 see, look at the numbers now. Look how many white males  
3 showed up here and then look how many Asian or hispanics  
4 are over there. You know, that would be fun.

5 But getting it right is to me making it look the  
6 way the law says, the way people agree they want it to be.  
7 And then convincing everybody that it is right.

8 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't have any  
9 additional questions.

10 Panelists?

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I just thought of something  
12 I'd like to question. It was along the lines of census  
13 data. During public hearings, the Commission hears  
14 testimony from concerned citizens the census data includes  
15 prisoners from local prisons, migrant farm workers who  
16 don't reside in the area and aren't reflective of their  
17 community. The citizens are asking this minority data not  
18 be counted in the formation of the district. How would  
19 you respond to these concerns?

20 MR. AFFLERBACH: Well, I think I would have to  
21 know what the law says as to why the census data is the  
22 final word in how the districts are drawn. I assume  
23 that's because it's the official most accurate count we  
24 have.

25 In terms of counting inmates in a prison, well,

1 sure, they can't vote while they're in jail. And farm  
2 workers, they're probably not going to vote either. But  
3 they're still people in our state. And that's why we  
4 count them.

5           And you know, maybe the person that's elected in  
6 that district ought to think about the fact that those  
7 people are living in that district. Even if they can't be  
8 voted -- they can't go out and vote for that  
9 representative, well, the person is still a  
10 representative. So they represent those people. So you  
11 know, let's count them. And I guess that's what I think  
12 about how the census should be taken.

13           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

14           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Further questions?

15           CHAIR AHMADI: Since we have time, I can  
16 ask you a question I had in my mind.

17           It's just, you know, given that you have a very  
18 long and interesting career as a journalist, can you share  
19 with us one of your very or the most exciting assignments?

20           MR. AFFLERBACH: It's been fun, I have to say. I  
21 did a lot of fun things that I get paid to do. There was  
22 a lot of things that didn't seem fun at the time but in  
23 retrospect they are.

24           But I would have to go back to my first big story  
25 in 1988 and that was Yellowstone National Park when it was



1 on fire. Now that's sad, but it's nature. Nature can  
2 handle itself.

3 But they chased all the tourists out of the park  
4 while they were fighting the fire. The journalists had  
5 free run. And so it was a great month of seeing the sites  
6 with flames in the background and wildlife running around  
7 and it's still a beautiful place. And it's come back. I  
8 must say that nature has restored it, and it's still  
9 there.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, sir. Thank you  
11 for sharing that.

12 MR. AFFLERBACH: Okay.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: If there are no further  
14 questions from the panelists, you have 28 minutes if  
15 you're interested in making a closing statement.

16 MR. AFFLERBACH: You want to hear more war  
17 stories? I'm not here to tell war stories.

18 And I really do believe in doing this. And  
19 everyone that comes here is going to say that. So I will  
20 just say that I really want this process to go forward,  
21 even if I'm not a part of it. And I will be watching.  
22 I'll be home once I get the right plug-in for my computer.  
23 I will make sure that I can see what goes on. I'll come  
24 to the meetings, because this is a great deal.

25 I would hate to see -- I'm not going to tell

1 people how to vote. But I'm going to tell people that  
2 they should look at these ballot propositions in November,  
3 compare what Prop. 20 does to what Prop. 27 really does.  
4 Read the law, see what it says, and then make up your  
5 mind. And that's my final word.

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you so much, Mr.  
7 Afflerbach, for coming to see us.

8 MR. AFFLERBACH: Thank you. It's been an honor.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Let's go off the record  
10 until 4:29.

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1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Let's go back on record.  
2 We have James Aldredge with us today. And he's our last  
3 interview of the day.

4 Dr. Aldredge, are you ready to begin?

5 DR. ALDREDGE: Yes, I am

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay.

7 What specific skills do you believe a good  
8 Commissioner should possess? Of those skills, which do  
9 you possess? Which do you not possess and how will you  
10 compensate for it? Is there anything in your life that  
11 would prohibit or impair your ability to perform all the  
12 duties of a Commissioner?

13 DR. ALDREDGE: With regard to the various skills  
14 that would be required from the Commission, I kind of have  
15 them listed here and I'll mention how they fit.

16 The whole skill of leadership. I think with a  
17 Commission that is performing that kind of an important  
18 task, you've got to have -- folks have got to have some  
19 leadership skills and know what that is. Certainly good  
20 communication skills, both written and oral.

21 Consensus building is an important skill. And if  
22 that does not happen, things kind of go awry if you don't  
23 have folks with that kind of capability.

24 And closely allied to that is to have people

25 skills that we often talk about, relational skills and

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1 interacting positively with everyone you come in contact  
2 with really in terms of business. Certainly an active  
3 listener to be able to listen to what folks are saying.

4           Body language is a part of that communications  
5 thing in terms of having folks feel comfortable that  
6 they're being listened to.

7           And then to, in fact, have some results that  
8 relates to what they have told you. The ability to  
9 conceptualize. This Commission in doing the redistricting  
10 and so forth and have a responsibility like with the Board  
11 of Equalization, it's important to be able to see the  
12 whole picture and how it might connect with, let's say,  
13 the budget reform effort that's going on now and with that  
14 joint Committee and so forth and to see how it all  
15 connects up.

16           And there is another connection that should be  
17 made even with the Board of Equalization to talk about the  
18 revenues. And they mention one place where there was a  
19 situation of long-term financial planning and so forth.  
20 So you've got to be able to conceptualize that. You can't  
21 do it in isolation even as you draw districts and so  
22 forth.

23           Ability, skill of being able to understand  
24 research and information and the findings and how you  
25 apply them. I think the skill is in how you apply them,

1 that data and information. You have to be able to be  
2 skillful in analyzing policy with regards to content and  
3 processes.

4 And Board skills, I think being a Board members  
5 that serves on task forces and various committees that  
6 demands skill, especially when you have some real tough  
7 deadlines to try to meet.

8 And the other is the one that I don't have, I  
9 understand a little bit of it. And that is I think the  
10 skills for those who have multi-lingual skills that  
11 understand, you know, what folks are talking about, but  
12 that is not a skill that I have. I understand a little  
13 bit of Spanish in terms of what I hear.

14 And then the other is computer skills. This is  
15 kind of witnessing the process thus far of everything that  
16 has been done in this process, you have to have the  
17 computer skills. And I suspect those skills will be  
18 requested from here on. So I would say two of them. Two  
19 of them would be multi-lingual and computer.

20 There's nothing that would hamper me from serving  
21 on the Commission.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance  
23 from your personal experience where you had to work with  
24 others to resolve a conflict or difference of opinion.  
25 Please describe the issue and explain your role in

1 addressing and resolving the conflict. If you are  
2 selected to serve on the Citizen's Redistricting  
3 Commission, tell us how you would resolve conflicts that  
4 may arise among the Commissioners.

5 DR. ALDREDGE: To start at the end of that, I  
6 think conflict is not necessarily bad. It's always going  
7 to be there. But if you can manage that conflict, then  
8 you're halfway there.

9 And the other is in the conflict is to not make  
10 it personal and to keep talking about the issue at hand  
11 and not the individual with messages of you. And I don't  
12 like this and that kind of thing. What is the issue and  
13 what are we trying to deal with. And recognize that  
14 you're not going to eradicate conflict but you've got to  
15 minimize it and manage it.

16 The other part of it relates to an experience  
17 that was important along the line of conflict and that is  
18 way back in Proposition 13 the Jarvis Committee and  
19 putting caps on taxation and so forth.

20 We had a situation in Fresno I was -- one of the  
21 three times I was the Acting City Manager we had union  
22 contracts come up. And the unions were going to the City  
23 Council both in public and in private saying that the  
24 staff and the negotiating team they were hiding money,  
25 they just didn't want to give the raises and so forth.

1           And as the Acting City Manager, I put together a  
2 Committee that I chaired of our staff as well as all of  
3 the unions, some of them were up for, you know, for  
4 signing and renewing. But we got all the unions in the  
5 room and made it very transparent in terms of getting a  
6 line item budget to each one of them so they can look at  
7 what the revenues are and what the expenditures, how it  
8 was built and all of that. We were using a program budget  
9 and to have them look at the program expenditures. And to  
10 have us through the first couple of Committee meetings  
11 with that group to explain what we how we came up with our  
12 recommendations as far as the budget is concerned. And to  
13 have them analyze it and then come back through a series  
14 of meetings to make any recommendation that they have and  
15 our kind of overview of the whole thing it was, look,  
16 we're stewards of this. We're not hiding anything. But  
17 if you see anything in there you want explained or you  
18 would recommend for us to change, then let us know and  
19 we'll take a look at it.

20           We did that. And after about three weeks of them  
21 still talking to counsel members and I guess to each  
22 other, they came back and we had no recommendations, no  
23 changes in there, because of transparency and I believe we  
24 established some trust. It was a trust issue and we got

25 it all out on the table. It's really not our money. You

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1 can take a look at it.

2           So many times it's kind of a secretive can  
3 process and conflict is built into it when you have labor  
4 management kind of situations and union. Not that unions  
5 are bad. But I'm just saying it's just kind of built in.

6           But transparency is important. And that was one  
7 I felt really good about as the Chair. And a couple folks  
8 have even recently -- and that it was a long time ago --  
9 have said, "You've always been honest with us." So that  
10 was that as far as conflict is concerned in Chairing that  
11 Committee.

12           What was the other -- was there another question?

13           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: If you're selected to  
14 serve on the Citizen's Redistricting Commission, tell us  
15 how you would resolve conflicts that may arise among  
16 Commissioners.

17           DR. ALDREDGE: Just deal with the issue. Keep it  
18 with the issue and try to be as honest and forth right as  
19 possible. And not make it personal. Once it goes to  
20 personal, I think it gets away from it.

21           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Question three: How will  
22 the Commission's work impact the state? Which of these  
23 impacts will improve the state the most? Is there any  
24 potential for the Commission's work to harm the state?  
25 And if so, in what ways?



1           DR. ALDREDGE: I think statewide we have probably  
2 about 100 different ethnic groups. I know in Fresno and  
3 the Valley, there are 85 plus. And we have that kind of a  
4 situation on the campus.

5           I think with a process like this, if you don't go  
6 too fast -- I mean, to rush to judgment so to speak and  
7 you have a good process where it's open, where folks can  
8 come and give their opinions and feel as though they have  
9 had that input. And then to try to prove it through the  
10 composition of the kind of districts you put together when  
11 you "redraw" the lines, I think they'll feel a bit more  
12 empowered.

13           I think right now there are some folks out there  
14 that feel that they're excluded from the process. And a  
15 lot of times it's just not explained either. And I  
16 think -- I'm not talking about a PR program. But I think  
17 the inconclusiveness that can occur out of this process  
18 and the empowerment and to try to be responsive and  
19 certainly have a Commission that listens to what folks are  
20 saying and then to go back and try to pull it all  
21 together. So that everybody is represented.

22           I think of the three type of communities that are  
23 out there, geographical. We talk about that a lot in  
24 terms of districting or redistricting with 100,000 people  
25 in Assembly district, 450,000 whatever is in the Senate

1 district and it's mostly on population. We make sure we  
2 configure.

3           And I have that kind of experience in Fresno  
4 where we said, okay, we have to spread this outgoing from  
5 at large to a district configuration. But we have to try  
6 to mix it up and have a profile of the total community.  
7 And some of the boundaries might be a little strange, but  
8 that's what we need to do and not just count bodies and  
9 make circles and say that's a district.

10           So I think the inconclusiveness and feel they are  
11 a part of something, it'll come out when voting starts and  
12 candidates and so forth come to certain communities and  
13 talk to them about voting for them.

14           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where  
15 you have had to work as part of a group to achieve a  
16 common goal. Tell us about the goal, describe your role  
17 within the group, and tell us how the group worked or did  
18 not work collaboratively to achieve this goal. If you are  
19 selected to serve on the Citizen's Redistricting  
20 Commission, tell us what you would do to foster  
21 collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure the  
22 Commission meets its legal deadlines.

23           DR. ALDREDGE: My experience in that was just  
24 recent where I chaired a Committee for Fresno Unified  
25 School District and it happened to be the fifth largest

1 school district in the state of California. And in  
2 chairing that, we had about 22 individuals represented  
3 most of them from agencies that had the range from police  
4 department at Cal State University Fresno, Fresno Police  
5 Department, the Child Protective Services, as well as  
6 student representative from the districts student  
7 organization. They kind of coalesce and so forth.

8           And we were asked to put together a plan with  
9 recommendations so that we can meet the budget deadline  
10 because the superintendent had talked to me and said with  
11 we'll put a million dollars in there but we have to go  
12 through the process. And we had two months to do it. Two  
13 months to do it. We made it. We gave our recommendation.  
14 They accepted it and.

15           Basically what it amounted it is some days we  
16 were running three meetings. In the morning, maybe  
17 something for the students. Following that at another  
18 school would be something for the staff and faculty. And  
19 then in the evening to accommodate the general community  
20 and the parents because they might be working or whatever  
21 else and to go out and once again have a set of questions  
22 that we ask everybody and then to have it kind of open  
23 ended. And we made the deadline and we got consensus.

24           The goal I think was achieved, because we spent

25 some time up front saying what is this all about? Where

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1 do we really want to get? It wasn't as refined as goals  
2 and objectives and all that. But we did say what do we  
3 want to end up within terms of student safety. What do we  
4 want to end up with regards to --

5 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

6 DR. ALDREDGE: -- facilities, securities and so  
7 forth. And that turned out to be very successful.

8 I think as far as the Commission is concerned, to  
9 foster collaboration in the time of peace, I think it's  
10 best to spend the time up front to talk about the plan  
11 rather than to plan and what we are looking for  
12 collaboratively before we get out there and start. So  
13 you've got to talk and plan it up front and then have kind  
14 of that road -- follow that road map.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
16 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
17 from all over California that come from very different  
18 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you are  
19 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the  
20 specifics skills that you possess that will make you  
21 effective in interacting with the public.

22 DR. ALDREDGE: Well I think it's a combination of  
23 skills and knowledge. That is to really recognize that  
24 the diversity of the population, not only on the ethnic  
25 basis but the 85 to 100 plus, but also you have the rural

1 as well as the urban situation that you'll face.

2           They have different kind of problems and  
3 perspectives in terms of being involved in the political  
4 process. And having a certain amount of cultural  
5 competency if you will is to recognize that. And that  
6 goes for middle class folks, what are they after and apply  
7 that in kind of an awareness content.

8           The other thing I think is -- it might sound a  
9 little pedantic or whatever, but to recognize that most  
10 folks talk about communities in terms of place. And I  
11 think there is another set that we can take a look at is  
12 within those not even within those boundaries of place or  
13 geography as far as communities is certain geographical  
14 but there are communities of interest.

15           For example, senior citizens. They don't have to  
16 live together in the same place, but they have four or  
17 five common problems that need to be dealt with. Okay.  
18 Community of interest.

19           Then -- I don't know, but this might be  
20 stereotyping, but in larger cities, they have  
21 communities -- identity communities, folks who identify  
22 very intrinsically with who they are and what group do  
23 they belong to. And we have to try to get them included.

24           Just really quickly, all of the like prison  
25 gangs, they don't all live or know each other. But there

1 are essential rituals and beliefs of family and the rest  
2 of that that make them a community. And that has to at  
3 least be looked at. It's really difficult. Place is  
4 convenience, but I think all of these sub-things have to  
5 be taken into consideration.

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: That concludes the  
7 20-minute general question period.

8 Mr. Ahmadi, would you like to start your 20  
9 minutes of questions?

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you.

11 Good afternoon, Dr. Aldredge.

12 DR. ALDREDGE: Good afternoon.

13 Oh, by the way, before I forget, the glasses are  
14 for glare and not for trying to cover up my eyes as I look  
15 at you and so forth. An accident happened a long time ago  
16 when I was a kid, so I have to wear those. I hope you can  
17 see a little bit of eye moment. I'm not hiding behind  
18 those glasses.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: That's not a problem.

20 DR. ALDREDGE: Thank you.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Let me start off with a very  
22 quick question. I believe you retired in 2004; is that  
23 correct

24 DR. ALDREDGE: From Cal State University, Fresno?

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes.

1 DR. ALDREDGE: Yeah. Yes.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. What are your current  
3 activities?

4 DR. ALDREDGE: Well, like most of it is on boards  
5 and so forth. That was like the Commission for the  
6 Unified School District. Right now I serve on the Board  
7 of Trustees for Fresno Pacific University, Mennonite  
8 school.

9 The other Board is one relating to mental health  
10 and it's mental health systems. That stretches over the  
11 valley. Spend time on that.

12 And then I'm also a volunteer returning back to  
13 west Fresno where I grew up. And that west Fresno area  
14 happens to be one of the high poverty areas in the state  
15 of California as well as the nation. And we have three  
16 folks got together that we graduated 1956. We call  
17 ourselves Hawk 56 and we just built a building for Fresno  
18 County and we have a couple of others that we're going to  
19 be building like for pre head start (phonetic) and so  
20 forth. And that's a big issue of the brain drain. And  
21 we're working on that, because we don't live in west  
22 Fresno anymore. I don't know whether that's good or bad.  
23 But spending a lot of time on that.

24 And then the California Endowment has its overall

25 effort of dealing with policy change and it's better

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1 communities of health relating to the health of a  
2 community. And I'm volunteering on that. The district  
3 director in Fresno, Sarah Reyes, used to be in the  
4 Assembly here. So I spent a lot of time doing that.

5           The folks in west Fresno felt that because I had  
6 directed the model cities program, because I was the City  
7 Manager and the Budget Officer for four years, they kind  
8 of drafted me to come back and volunteer with each of them  
9 and we call it the west Fresno collaborative, 92706 ZIP  
10 code. And to tell them about how the stimulus dollars  
11 work, if anybody knows how they work and how they ought to  
12 go about doing it. So I've been going around and giving  
13 technical assistance to not-for-profit groups, because I  
14 know maybe just a little bit more than they do.

15           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Thank you so  
16 much. Are you finished?

17           DR. ALDREDGE: Yes. I'm sorry.

18           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

19           So obviously you have had a very distinguished  
20 career at the University and later you switched to become  
21 a City Manager. Could you tell us what was the reason for  
22 changing that?

23           DR. ALDREDGE: Can I reverse that?

24           CHAIR AHMADI: Sure.

25           DR. ALDREDGE: I started out working Fresno



1 Counties Economic Communities Commission and the poverty  
2 program. Then I left there two years after it got  
3 started. Then I went to the City of Fresno Human  
4 Relations Director. And that's when I worked my way up to  
5 become the City Manager.

6 But simultaneously, I was teaching at night. And  
7 I did that for a total of 40 years. And what happened --  
8 total of 40 years and when I got my doctorate degree in  
9 about 1985 or something, I then said 25 years in city  
10 management is enough. I professionally feel that for one  
11 person, you know, to have may be some influence over  
12 what's going on, that's a long time. You should move on,  
13 Jim, and go full time at Cal State University Fresno and  
14 teach full time. So then I left there and went full time  
15 to Fresno State and taught and became a Professor Emeritus  
16 or whatever.

17 So that was government and part-time teaching and  
18 then full time after I got my doctorate degree.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Thanks for the  
20 clarification. Appreciate it.

21 So as you mentioned, taking you back a few years  
22 when you were at the Human Relations Commission Director,  
23 but after that you became the City Manager. Well, you  
24 were a member of the Commission and then you were promoted  
25 to become the City Manager and you were directing that

1 City Commission; is that correct?

2 DR. ALDREDGE: No. I was in charge of it. Those  
3 Commissions and all that, I came as a Deputy City Manager  
4 and I moved from Human Relations Director to an Assistant  
5 City Manager. And they said go and do the model cities  
6 program which is five years from the Department of Housing  
7 and Urban Development. We have a citizen participation  
8 component in it, and you already have experience that as  
9 Fresno County ELC and the maximum feasible participation  
10 and all of that, and we now want you also to take on the  
11 responsibility for developing a -- developing fully the  
12 Human Relations Commission. And by the way, a Youth  
13 Commission and Aging Commission.

14 And by the way, the Aging Commission has evolved  
15 over into the Triple A, the triple agency on aging, Fresno  
16 and Madera County.

17 And then the other one was Commission on the  
18 Status of Women. And as we would put one into operation,  
19 folks would say, "That's working pretty good. City, can't  
20 we do that." And then they turned to me and say,  
21 "Aldredge, can't we do it?" Okay, we can do it. And we'd  
22 hire a staff person.

23 I was never on one of those as a Board member. I  
24 was always as an administrative staff person that oversaw  
25 those operations kind of -- really simultaneously.

1           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you for the  
2 clarification.

3           The next question I'd like to ask you relates to  
4 the diversity in the state. So in your mind, is it  
5 important to present serve political and geographic  
6 boundaries like cities and counties? Since you have the  
7 experience as a city manager when re drawing the lines?  
8 Why is it important?

9           DR. ALDREDGE: Well, I think things happen more  
10 probably on a regional basis. And we should take a look  
11 at a regional profile for representation. Example: There  
12 is a water situation in the central valley for the  
13 farmers. We used to be the big debate of how much water  
14 would the city of Fresno need in that water supply. And  
15 we'd send our representative to the State and also talk to  
16 Congress person and all that, we need this. And then the  
17 folks that were farmers and out in the county, they would  
18 say our representative.

19           I think it would be a good situation if person  
20 from the state has some rural and some urban territories  
21 they have to take care of and then you wouldn't run into  
22 just the isolation and the silos of this is what we're  
23 doing and this is who I have to represent and so forth. I  
24 think that mixture has to be there. That's on issues like

25 water. I think we need to do it in terms of people.

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1           And let's talk about income. If the census data  
2 shows there ought to be some mixture of income, then let's  
3 see if we can't build the boundaries around that, because  
4 so many folks -- and I can only give this a hypothetical.  
5 I suspect the folks in Beverly Hills, if they got this  
6 carved out they don't want to talk -- and I don't know how  
7 you get to it. But they don't want to talk much about  
8 dealing with the problems that are down in south central  
9 Los Angeles or over in Watts. They have their own domain.  
10 But if there was representation that would kind of, you  
11 know, it's in your district, then you would get less of a  
12 separation. And I think they would mix more.

13           Hopefully, that answers it.

14           CHAIR AHMADI: Yes.

15           DR. ALDREDGE: In terms of we've got to mix it up  
16 and draw the boundaries accordingly. And I would say that  
17 relates to drawing boundaries on something other than  
18 population and drawing lines around population.

19           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

20           So from your professional experiences and  
21 responsibilities that you have had, to what extent, if  
22 any, you have had interaction with the Governor, his  
23 staff, or the Board of Equalization?

24           DR. ALDREDGE: The Board of Equalization was kind  
25 of indirect. When I was assistant City Manager and the

1 budget person, the redevelopment agency had to deal with  
2 this new thing then called tax increment financing where  
3 that's even a big debate now about property tax income and  
4 freezing that -- I don't want to take it to -- but  
5 freezing the base and the increment would be -- that would  
6 a crew to the redevelopment agency to do infrastructure  
7 and some improvements in all of that. And we had to deal  
8 with the whole taxation issue property tax and so  
9 forthwith the Board of Equalization and the rules and  
10 regulations that came out of the state Department of  
11 Finance.

12           What was the other part? What was the other  
13 part?

14           CHAIR AHMADI: The Governor and his staff.

15           DR. ALDREDGE: I happen to know when I was  
16 looking for the city of Fresno necessity for example, Ken  
17 Maddy, who they established a -- this is more recent --  
18 established with Chuck Poochigian and some other folks  
19 from that area, they have the Maddy Institute. And I was  
20 one of the founding members as I worked out political  
21 science department at Cal State Fresno and now it is a  
22 501(c)(3). But the Maddy Institute for Public Policy  
23 still goes on and we had some dialogue with some state  
24 folks then.

25           The closest I've ever come to that was one time a

1 member -- new member brought me up to meet Willie Brown.  
2 That was way back when. I think it was to show I know I'm  
3 connected with the local guys, Willie and that kind of  
4 thing.

5 And then we did have a lobbyist way back when,  
6 you know. But nothing recent like Davis, Governor Davis,  
7 no. Schwarzenegger, no. Wilson, no. It really went back  
8 probably to Jerry Brown early on.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you.

10 DR. ALDREDGE: No dialogue with them.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you, sir.

12 How much time do we have?

13 MS. HAMEL: Five.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't have any questions  
15 at this point.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Hello, Mr. Aldredge

18 DR. ALDREDGE: How are you?

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: How are you doing?

20 DR. ALDREDGE: Fine, thus far.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: That's good. I have a  
22 follow-up question on one of Mr. Ahmadi's questions.

23 You were talking about keeping the cities and  
24 boundaries together and you would like to have different  
25 mixtures in each of the districts. I just wanted to gain

1 a little bit better understanding of what you meant by  
2 that. How would the people feel empowered if like you  
3 were saying, you linked some of the Beverly Hills  
4 individuals with the south central? Would we have the  
5 same commonality. And if so, what would those be? If  
6 not, what would those be? And why would you feel that  
7 they would be a good mix?

8 DR. ALDREDGE: Okay. Using that example, their  
9 representative, let's say hypothetically from Beverly  
10 Hills somewhere along the line would have to at least go  
11 into south central Los Angeles and listen for a little  
12 while, because there's some votes that come out of there  
13 relating to his or her tenure as an assemblyperson for a  
14 Senator. The way it is now is just siloed and I don't  
15 have to bother with those folks. And I'm talking about  
16 vice versa.

17 And I think you would be a lot better of an  
18 understanding if you took a criteria and put them -- let's  
19 say, here's ten things that ought to be in the mix  
20 ideally. Here is you've got to have six of the ten no  
21 matter what the combination is to have a viable  
22 representative district. And then you try to draw the  
23 boundaries to do that. If the geography is going to south  
24 central Los Angeles is impossible, then what else is

25 there? Is there a rural part to Beverly Hills? Well,

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1 deal with some rural issues. Deal with something other  
2 than having it the same way you have it.

3           And I think that "cross pollination" would start  
4 to help. Things are really isolated now and folks tend  
5 not to want to even talk about somebody else's problem.  
6 It's mine and what's in it for me.

7           And I think it has to -- I believe it has to be  
8 more than just aggregating as it is now. Nobody's fault.  
9 900,000 people for I believe it's assembly and -- no.  
10 Senate. And 450,000 for Assembly people. If we can carve  
11 out those populations within kind of a purified situation,  
12 then that's -- a lot of people think that's better. I  
13 think it needs to be you carve out a better mixture. I  
14 just feel it's not mixed only because of what we faced in  
15 Fresno and as a result of that, after I had gone out to  
16 Fresno state, we had it built in where you got to take a  
17 look at, you know, the data not from the census because  
18 that's of ten years. It's the data that you can get from  
19 the Department of Finance and get that every five years.  
20 And we got to take a look at it and redraw the lines.

21           And we had a couple of criteria that's in there.  
22 Certainly we talked about the ethnic and income mix.  
23 Because the situation that we had we got the north that  
24 thrives and the south that doesn't and deterioration. And  
25 what they came up with, given the criteria that we had set



1 up, is that they created another district. When I was  
2 there with six and following the criteria, they couldn't  
3 get to it too well, so they created a seventh one so  
4 that's what we have now.

5           And if we keep talking about that right mixture  
6 where folks share and not be north against south and all  
7 the rest of that, that you might wind up with more  
8 districts. And there's nothing wrong with looking at  
9 that, I mean, in my judgment. Because we face that there  
10 because honestly you could count -- they might be looking  
11 and that kind of stuff but I just -- hey. North were the  
12 Republicans cancellations. South were the Democrats.  
13 Spending, redevelopment, social services programs and all  
14 that and the other was talking about, you know, other  
15 things.

16           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: When they redistrict  
17 in Fresno, did they take those into consideration? And if  
18 so, how did that work out? Did that work out better?

19           DR. ALDREDGE: Mixing?

20           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yes

21           DR. ALDREDGE: Yes, it did. And I was the City  
22 Manager and the City Council that had gotten voted on that  
23 we will go from at-large representation to district  
24 representation. Aldredge, go figure it out.

25           And so with the planning staff and the folks in

1 the clerk's office that had the fair political practices  
2 stuff and had dealt with a lot of this representation and  
3 so forth, we sat down in the Committee and just said, here  
4 it is. Because really it got to a point where you could  
5 almost -- and this might be an adequate sampling -- figure  
6 out who's -- for a social program who was going to make  
7 the motion and who was going to second it. And if they  
8 haven't done their homework with the folks up north, then  
9 it might go by the wayside.

10 Vice versa, putting together the budget -- and I  
11 was a budget officer for four years -- and I live up there  
12 now I can kind of indict myself. I'm not guilty about it,  
13 but I can kind of indict myself that they're concerned  
14 about graffiti, "Aldredge, City Manager guy, make sure  
15 that no graffiti shows up." Now they got trucks out there  
16 almost every day doing graffiti getting rid of it,  
17 especially up north where it's up-wind and that's where  
18 the growth is up by Clovis and all of that.

19 And so -- and the budget, we've all been to --  
20 they talk beautification up there. I mean, that's just  
21 the way it is, because we've got the districts but they've  
22 got beautification. I know generally who would make the  
23 motion, who is going to make the second, because, you  
24 know, they weren't talking about the necessities like down  
25 where the Secondary Education Act started, where the war

1 on poverty was and all the rest of it. It's just  
2 different needs.

3 I think what could probably have happened a lot  
4 better is to kind of jiggle it around and go north/south  
5 because we got the south not too good and the north -- but  
6 we stayed with that. But we did have a criteria that  
7 considered more than just configuring population figures.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay

9 DR. ALDREDGE: Does that make sense?

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah. Thank you.

11 DR. ALDREDGE: Got to be more than population. I  
12 keep just thinking about that.

13 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Can you expand on your  
14 involvement with the various other ethnic groups while as  
15 City Manager and how that experience will be beneficial to  
16 the Commission?

17 DR. ALDREDGE: Right now, on a Board of Directors  
18 of Healing Hope -- and that is one that is for the  
19 betterment of the southeast Asian community. Moore Chang  
20 is the executive director.

21 We've had a problem in getting money, because  
22 United Way doesn't have any new money and folks are just  
23 not funding. But we had a couple of fund-raisers and all  
24 of that, plus trying to get interns from Cal State  
25 University Fresno to do some of the counseling work and so

1 forth. And so that's one southeast Asian community.

2 I also came in contact with them a lot as first  
3 generation college students doing undergraduate policy  
4 programs curriculum part in the school of social work  
5 education. And there were a number of southeast Asian  
6 students that having trouble with their English and  
7 writing and all of that. And I'd try to help them. They  
8 would come by my office and I try to do something. And I  
9 was referring them out and so forth. That's the ethnic  
10 group.

11 If you go back historically, it goes back to the  
12 grape strike in Delano with citizenship there. I give you  
13 one example of trying to help them and their action. The  
14 United Farm Workers, they were in Delano striking and they  
15 wanted to have a convention in Fresno that really split  
16 the community. I can use one of that on the conflict  
17 thing in terms of they shouldn't be accommodating, you  
18 know. They're on strike down there. We don't like it.  
19 And you've got the agricultural influence in Fresno,  
20 because it's the agriculture business capital of the  
21 world. And now you have the farm workers.

22 So what we did is with -- these names don't mean  
23 anything -- Gilbert Padilla and Hectar Pazzi and some  
24 others folks that were part of the grape strike down  
25 there, we got them in the same room with some folks from

1 the Farm Bureau and a couple of others to say, look, you  
2 know, we got to do something about it. I got back to the  
3 Human Relations Commission and the bottom line was we said  
4 they're human beings. This is the way they make their  
5 living and we need to try to accommodate them, whether you  
6 agree with their philosophy or not.

7           We got that consensus. And what happened is the  
8 city of Fresno -- war story -- I did what I did -- but you  
9 asked me. From the Human Relations Director, I went back  
10 to the Human Relations Commission and they said yes, do  
11 the following: Allow them to go into our regional park  
12 and they can stay there all night. We usually have a  
13 12:00 curfew. They can stay there. And I then I  
14 recommended -- we have four playgrounds and the gymnasium.  
15 And they have showers and the rest of that. And the folks  
16 that are going to be here for three days, at their  
17 convention, no place to stay, why don't we accommodate  
18 them by allowing them to use the gym with sleeping on the  
19 floor or whatever and showers and so forth.

20           And I won't go into this. Some of my best  
21 friends are hispanic and all of the rest of that. But my  
22 relationship with them started back when they had the  
23 Paserro program. I worked in the cantaloupes and all the  
24 rest of that, and we learned a little bit of Spanish. We  
25 lived under trucks. We didn't have any place else to go

1 except haul cantaloupes and that kind of stuff out in the  
2 great west side.

3           So it's been an organized basis as a Board of  
4 Directors or whatever or in the classroom and then just  
5 helping folks. I mean, my basic philosophy -- you didn't  
6 ask me. But my basic philosophy is if you have some  
7 hustle marks and you want to do something, I don't mind  
8 spending my time doing that. If you don't want to do  
9 anything, you don't want to make any progress, I don't  
10 have any time, because there's so many other folks that I  
11 think I can spend my time with. So it's been across the  
12 board.

13           The Mennonite situation, but the other half on a  
14 diversity basis is that what -- we're still on the  
15 diversity thing? On the diversity basis with the  
16 Catholics at Saint Agnes Hospital and serving on a couple  
17 of committees at the national level with Sisters of Holy  
18 Cross.

19           And then the Jewish affiliation was with Benny  
20 Brit in working on their student athletes of the year  
21 selections every year. I finally got off. I said after  
22 about 45 years of working with those folks, let somebody  
23 else do it.

24           So if you're a human individual and you want to  
25 do something, I want to try to help you.

1           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In your application, I  
2 saw that you listed your Ph.D. I didn't see your  
3 undergraduate. Can you give us a little bit of  
4 information on your undergraduate degree?

5           MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

6           DR. ALDREDGE: Started out the Master's Degree  
7 was at Cal State University Fresno in political science  
8 public administration. And then the Doctorate Degree I  
9 went to University of Southern California for a little  
10 while, and I was doing intensives on the weekend. And  
11 then the workload got so large that my boss and I agreed  
12 that, okay, doing the budget and labor relations I needed  
13 to be there more often.

14           Then I shifted over and officially graduated from  
15 Golden Gate University that did intensives on Saturday and  
16 Sunday. Because I was here Friday, Saturday, and Sunday  
17 to their campus here. They were in political science  
18 public administration with the specialties in organization  
19 development.

20           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You listed your  
21 Master's. Did you also -- obviously, obtained your  
22 Bachelor's --

23           DR. ALDREDGE: Yeah. That was in recreation  
24 therapy. I started out wanting to be a recreation  
25 therapist in veterans' hospitals. And there was no

1 Master's degree program in therapeutic recreation to do  
2 that. So I went to public administration and found myself  
3 going all the way through to a doctorate degree in  
4 political science public administration. But I started  
5 out in recreation therapy or therapeutic recreation.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you very much.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano, would you like  
8 to begin your 20 minutes?

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Sure. Good afternoon,  
10 Doctor.

11 When you participated in the redistricting and  
12 your work in transitioning the city of Fresno at-large  
13 election process, to what extent did you apply the Voting  
14 Rights Act or any voting rights laws?

15 DR. ALDREDGE: As part of that team, the city  
16 attorney's office -- and also it was like the city  
17 attorney's office, the planning department and the city  
18 clerk's office, those folks are responsible for like that  
19 form 700. We had them involved. And public works to a  
20 little bit, but mostly the planning department, because  
21 they're the folks that do the local agency formation work  
22 for setting up new districts and so forth. And so it was  
23 a group of us that we did it on the task force basis.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How important was equal  
25 population to you in this process?



1 DR. ALDREDGE: That's what we were shooting for.  
2 That was it primarily.

3 And I know the population of the city, because I  
4 remember we were talking about -- at that time, we were  
5 talking about about 60,000 people in each one of the  
6 districts. And at the time we had about 350,000  
7 population. It's well over that now. But that's what we  
8 started with.

9 But as I said, we put some other elements in  
10 there to make sure that it wasn't north versus south and  
11 we did it as a staff and we recommended it. It wasn't  
12 really popular with a couple of folks.

13 One in particular that was up north that was  
14 going to have to come back past the Mason Dixon line to  
15 get some votes. But then it was good for the west Fresno,  
16 the worst poverty area, to move them as far as the lines  
17 are concerned to go over to the down town area and then  
18 stretch a little bit into southeast Fresno. And then a  
19 little bit up north to get the 60,000. And that was a  
20 catalyst for them saying we're drawing the lines again  
21 against this criteria, and they now have resident six,  
22 district seven because of what the basic policy was  
23 originally.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How did you handle those that  
25 were not comfortable like the north? It wasn't popular

1 with the north. Do you remember those discussions?

2 DR. ALDREDGE: Yeah. That was mostly with  
3 council members.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Council members.

5 DR. ALDREDGE: And it was a matter of showing the  
6 criteria and stating what the philosophy was in putting  
7 this together. This is what we as a staff came up with  
8 and here's the rational. We just didn't go out and start  
9 drawing some lines and circling certain kind of areas. We  
10 looked at it as a objectively as we could from a  
11 perspective of adding more than just the numbers.

12 And once again, I think one of the things that we  
13 spent some time on is a part of the Clovis Unified School  
14 District is within the city limits of Fresno, which often  
15 causes confusion, because they're not conterminous with  
16 Clovis and the school district or with the -- so they're  
17 there and folks used to tell us about being taxed three  
18 times. And we got to give to Clovis. We got to give to  
19 the city. And you guys come up with all these fees and  
20 charges and so forth.

21 So we said you know, that's a good catalyst for  
22 mixing it. And we don't need to shy away from this. And  
23 before we got through, and doing some individual talking  
24 with couple of counsel members that were going to have to  
25 adjust, they finally saw it and it was on an individual

1 basis. Because we kind of felt that, look, we got to go  
2 around and do individual explanations if necessary rather  
3 than in the public arena where they have to say we don't  
4 want to mix with them and it comes out in the newspaper  
5 here's what they want.

6 We got to talk to them on a one-to-one basis and  
7 tell them what our criteria is and how we came up with  
8 this. And over time of giving information to them, they  
9 said, okay. But at first it was like you go back with a  
10 preliminary and you get stares. It's interesting stares  
11 of, what do you come in here for? That kind of stuff.  
12 But that's the nature of being the City Manager.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How long did it take to  
14 convince them?

15 DR. ALDREDGE: Oh, we did it within -- I think we  
16 had something like nine months to do it. And I'd say  
17 about six month period we did it. We had about two or  
18 three drafts that come before the City Council as I  
19 recall. I just don't remember, you know. We went before  
20 the City Council. They said, yeah, it's okay. Take a  
21 look at this. Yes, here's what we've done. Here's where  
22 we are and so forth.

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I see. Regarding the  
24 unification -- excuse me -- urban unification projects,  
25 can you tell me more about your ability to bridge the

1 differences between the residents and the effected  
2 agencies during this?

3 DR. ALDREDGE: In terms of unification.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yes.

5 DR. ALDREDGE: Unification and annexation is a  
6 difficult one. I served on the present executive mayor's  
7 transition team. And part of that was yes, we can go out  
8 and consolidate police and fire and that kind of thing.  
9 We have a number of county islands inside the city of  
10 Fresno and folks don't want to vote themselves into the  
11 city of Fresno. And they want to remain a county island.  
12 And there's not very much feasibility now as there was  
13 then.

14 We still had some problems, because when you  
15 annex those areas, now you got to provide police services.  
16 You've got to respond to infrastructure situation, the  
17 curbs, gutters, and that kind of thing. And there is no  
18 money now. They're running a deficit. And so they've  
19 kind of backed off.

20 But with the police and the fire consolidation  
21 and unification, there's still a lot of those islands.  
22 Folks don't want to come in because they don't trust, you  
23 know, the city of Fresno to do what they said they were  
24 going to do for their neighbors down the street. And  
25 explaining that we don't have any money is not what you

1 promised us. You didn't do it. So you have that kind of  
2 push back, if you will.

3           And there are a couple of special districts for  
4 police and fire that folks want to still have their  
5 independent district as opposed to having it run by those  
6 folks at city hall. So it's still a problem, that  
7 unification thing is still a problem because you've got  
8 some county islands and nobody can afford to take them  
9 over and then you got the resistance of folks. And that's  
10 just an ongoing situation that I don't think -- I don't  
11 personally think it's going to be solved in the near  
12 future.

13           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So it's been ongoing for a  
14 long time?

15           DR. ALDREDGE: Yeah. And I don't think it's  
16 going to get any better.

17           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you have any proposed  
18 solution?

19           DR. ALDREDGE: I'm no longer City Manager. I  
20 don't have to figure it out.

21           We did get a chance to put 911 together and that  
22 was okay. With police, it's who's going to police it.  
23 And collective bargaining says, okay, who's going to be  
24 the chief? Now I'm a lieutenant and I'm a second in  
25 charge when we consolidate and unify and do all this other

1 stuff. What do I do? I got to promote back? And it's a  
2 matter of folks loosing positions and that's a problem.  
3 They would just rather stay independent. Yeah.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: County islands of Fresno.  
5 Okay.

6 DR. ALDREDGE: And because who was going to  
7 patrol them? And if the county is doing it now, we like  
8 the county better than you Fresno folks, because you  
9 Fresno folks are running a bigger deficit at this time. I  
10 mean as we speak, than the county. And they've been okay.  
11 And we like the new sheriff that we vote for and all the  
12 rest of that. We don't vote for the police chief and so  
13 we can't control that part. So we don't want to talk to  
14 you. Plus, you can't afford it.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I was just curious, what was  
16 your role and degree of decision making when involving the  
17 jurisdiction all boundaries?

18 DR. ALDREDGE: As far as consolidation is  
19 concerned?

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Of the redistricting  
21 regarding the unification and your participation, like if  
22 a Commissioner is going to be tasked with drawing the  
23 lines and doing the decision making.

24 DR. ALDREDGE: As the City Manager, the buck  
25 stops there. And our activity with the local agency

1 formation Commission that you know, gets the new -- that  
2 deals with any local agency formation or changing of lines  
3 of a school district or whatever else, that first is kind  
4 of a policy directive from the City Council and on issues  
5 like that at least in Fresno, they say City Manager acting  
6 or permanent, you're it. And you find yourself -- I've  
7 got to get involved in it. I've got to either co-chair  
8 this or I've got to, you know, chair it to make sure it  
9 happens. So it's a matter of the position of the City  
10 Manager having that responsibility.

11           And on those important ones like that, I did not  
12 want to delegate it out to somebody in public works or a  
13 forth level person, because they didn't feel the urgency  
14 that I did. And I wound up Chairing a lot of those  
15 special task forces when they said what about this and  
16 what about that? And they usually come in spurts. You  
17 know, they have a conversation and they say we want to do  
18 something about this. Give us a report. And so mine was  
19 a leadership role that I did not relinquish.

20           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What are the lessons learned  
21 from your redistricting participation that you can apply  
22 to the Citizen's Redistricting Commission?

23           DR. ALDREDGE: Things are not -- you can describe  
24 them better than they can be done. Takes a lot of work.

25           And the one overcoming element is trust. You can

1 get the trust from the folks that you're dealing with that  
2 want to come in, that's fine. But then you have to have  
3 something to back it up. They trust you, then you got to  
4 follow up. Or else it becomes a charade and you really  
5 don't want to be a part of that. And you want to  
6 always -- this is the latest word I get in public  
7 administration -- be transparent. To tell them what you  
8 can do and what you can't do. And that was and is a big  
9 issue that I took that one on myself to Chair it.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Why was that a big issue?

11 DR. ALDREDGE: Because of consolidation and  
12 annexation and the city of Fresno at one time must have  
13 had -- I forget in terms of county islands, we must have  
14 had 60 or 70 of them. You know, you go across into, you  
15 know, cross the street and you're over in the county. You  
16 turn up this street you're back in the city and all of  
17 that.

18 And usually, the folks who are running for  
19 office, whether it's for a post or whether, it was in the  
20 new districting would say, yes, we have to do something  
21 about that. We have to make things more efficient.  
22 That's not sarcasm. That's just saying that's what you  
23 want to do. So you come in and say we've got to have this  
24 done. And then you go out and you work. Work on it.

25 See, one of the other things too is cities,



1 Fresno, they want to have annexed the commercial. We  
2 don't like vacant fields. And then they are into some  
3 usually ongoing sales tax agreement on how are you going  
4 to divide the sales tax. And just kind of keeps going on  
5 and on. So ongoing negotiations that's usually in my  
6 experience in 25 years that I was down there, it's kind of  
7 an open-ended thing.

8 MS. HAMEL: Five minutes.

9 DR. ALDREDGE: That is very political.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Open-ended never gets  
11 resolved?

12 DR. ALDREDGE: You go at it little by little.  
13 Annex the next 59 houses over here because we can run the  
14 sewer by there. But not as massive as you'd like to say  
15 let's just get rid of all the county islands and city of  
16 Fresno will come in there. Like I said, can't do it now  
17 because you can't afford it. And you'd be duping people  
18 into crazy stuff if you couldn't do the infrastructure  
19 that usually is required like sewer. Folks coming off --

20 I remember a deal in the middle of town with  
21 septic tanks. Okay. We have to put a sewer line if  
22 there. This is a low-income area. They're relying on us.  
23 Can we afford to put in a sewer line? No, not really. So  
24 folks now in the new development where the sewer line is  
25 going in. But yeah, the developer passes that onto the

1 home buyer, you know. And the folks down here can't get  
2 it done that way.

3 And then you go back out and you talk about it  
4 being, okay, let's finance it through a benefit assessment  
5 district. Well, how much is that going to cost us? Well,  
6 only cost you this. Well, no, we don't want that.

7 It's just ongoing. Honest.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I believe you.

9 What do you expect to be the more challenging  
10 duties and responsibilities of the CRC?

11 DR. ALDREDGE: The most challenges?

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah. The most challenging  
13 duties in your opinion.

14 DR. ALDREDGE: Having a multi criterion district.  
15 I might be missing it. When you disaggregate population,  
16 then the silos set in. So it's going to be how do you put  
17 these elements in so that you in Beverly Hills --  
18 hypothetical -- you in Beverly Hills, you're the  
19 representative. You're the Assemblyperson. Now you got  
20 to be a little bit of concern -- have a little bit of  
21 concern with south central Los Angeles.

22 And the other one has got to have a little bit of  
23 concern for what happens in Watts, as an example. It  
24 can't be that person in Watts going it alone, because  
25 usually the votes don't come out that way. In order to

1 keep your position or your office, that's just the way  
2 penalty of perjury particulates are. But I think you've  
3 got to mix it with the criteria. You've got the take the  
4 chance on doing it. That's where that leadership that I  
5 talked about comes in.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How do you see the role of  
7 Commissioner impacting your current lifestyle?

8 DR. ALDREDGE: Oh, I think it's great. If I'm  
9 not chosen, I still think it is really great, because it  
10 gets to the representation. And involvement and inclusion  
11 of a lot of folks that are apathetic, because they don't  
12 see any end result. I think the results are --

13 MS. HAMEL: One minute.

14 DR. ALDREDGE: The results of the whole situation  
15 will come about is when pieces of legislation and bills  
16 and so forth come forth that relate to those population s.

17 And you also have a situation where if I'm a part  
18 of your district and I'm being left out, then at least we  
19 can talk to you in light of the ballot box.

20 Now, there's no -- you know, you try to get would  
21 you kindly co-sponsor this or second the motion on this  
22 for our person that is trying to do something, and then  
23 you got a problem.

24 So, no, I'll root for the effort whether I'm on  
25 or off, because I think it's great.

1           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you. No further  
2 questions.

3           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Are there follow-up  
4 questions from the panel?

5           CHAIR AHMADI: Not from me.

6           VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I have one small  
7 follow-up question.

8           It deals with one of Kerry's questions and was  
9 talking about the redistricting of Fresno. I was just  
10 wondering during this redistricting, did your office take  
11 public comment from communities of interest? And if so,  
12 how was that obtained?

13          DR. ALDREDGE: We did a legal notice, a regular  
14 notification process and especially in those areas where  
15 you have social programs like model cities and ELC and so  
16 forth, we work with them to get the word out that we'd be  
17 talking about this. The initiative that came for the  
18 redistricting was a push by the black political counsel  
19 who had about three or four terms of non people of color  
20 representing them. And they said no, we got to do  
21 something about this. So they went on and they pushed for  
22 it, got it. And then helped us publicize it.

23          And then we had our own means of publicizing it  
24 and then have them come before the city of Fresno and the  
25 dynamic was City Manager Aldredge, this is your meeting.

1 You handle it and you answer the question. And so, okay,  
2 staff, let's be prepared to go in. And if we did it  
3 honestly, that's about as good as we can do it. City  
4 Council is not going to, you know, get into this debate  
5 and so forth.

6 Which is another point of folks that come with  
7 what they feel is a legitimate questions. I mean, you  
8 can't reprimand them and say that's, you know, off the  
9 wall or whatever. You need to listen to them. That's  
10 that active listening. And that's what we did.

11 And the person holding the hearing -- we had a  
12 series of meeting -- the holding the hearings and having  
13 the meetings out in each one of the districts that we had  
14 proposed here's what we're proposing. This is going to be  
15 configuration for this geographical area. Here's this one  
16 is for this. Here's your counsel member now. But here's  
17 the way it is. This is the area about 60,000 people in  
18 it. Give us your input kind of a thing.

19 So we had community meetings and then some  
20 official hearings before the City Council. And the person  
21 that was -- the person that was out there was me, because  
22 that goes with the territory.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That's  
24 all.

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I have several questions

1 if the panel is done. Great.

2 Assuming that legal counsel advised you that your  
3 ideas about drawing the districts lines were not  
4 consistent with the law, what would you do in that  
5 circumstance?

6 DR. ALDREDGE: You means in terms of this  
7 Commission?

8 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Correct.

9 DR. ALDREDGE: I believe you have to ask you  
10 know, what is wrong with what is being proposed and then  
11 to try to come into compliance. You don't want to do  
12 anything that's illegal. And there needs to be some  
13 discussions rather than -- this is not to say the way it  
14 would happen -- crossing folks in the hall and say, "Oh,  
15 by the way, what you did is all messed up" and then you  
16 don't talk to each other. Let's sit down and talk about  
17 where we're going wrong and to make it legal and get it  
18 right.

19 As it relates to what happened in the voting  
20 rights bill or if that's what we're doing or the enabling  
21 legislation for how lines are drawn in California. You've  
22 got to do the legislative intent and what's legal.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I've heard you talk about  
24 what sounds like a pretty impressive life history being in  
25 the cantaloupe fields and then being a tenured professor

1 and City Manager. What life experiences have best  
2 prepared you to draw fair and equitable districts?

3 DR. ALDREDGE: Living in west Fresno and going to  
4 high school at Edison High School in west Fresno and  
5 experiencing the exclusion that that area went through and  
6 is going through says something needs to happen. And to  
7 work with folks that have been excluded and they want to  
8 get -- they want to be a part of the whole system, but the  
9 system doesn't give them a reason to want to do it. So  
10 they are on the outside. And that's not fair and  
11 equitable. That's not equity.

12 So just seeing folks suffering a little bit and  
13 now after the professional stuff is kind of over and  
14 you're doing volunteer work is to see how important the  
15 political process really is. How things really happen.  
16 Witness folks not understanding how the stimulus money  
17 work. They hear the President talk about it and they hear  
18 what's going to happen, the number of jobs. And then  
19 nothing happens. You've got to understand how the budget  
20 process works and so forth.

21 And a lot of our folks that are disenfranchised  
22 or apathetic and so forth, they just don't know. And so  
23 there has to be some proactive part on the government to  
24 get them included. For some folks, it's that's good. I'm  
25 glad they're out there and don't care. I'll just go about

1 my business. But my experience is just seeing how the  
2 political process works. And this is a part of that  
3 political process of representation and hopefully folks  
4 responding with goods and services and policies and  
5 programs and so forth that benefit everybody rather than  
6 have the silos that now exist, I believe.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How does California's  
8 diversity impact its residents' representational  
9 preferences?

10 DR. ALDREDGE: I think in the large cities that  
11 they have a number of organizations that some that have  
12 been listed on some of the literature that came to the  
13 candidates early on that have a concern about that. But I  
14 wonder about the rural. And I'm talking about rural  
15 citizens and those small cities out there that are  
16 adversely impacted and they don't quite know how it really  
17 works. The headquarters office, for example, in Fresno,  
18 you have Cogdale, Florez, the Senators. You have Arambula  
19 is independent now. And then you have Valines (phonetic).

20 People have a little bit better shot at it in  
21 west Fresno, because they can come back to west Fresno and  
22 you'll find out where their office is. But for those  
23 folks that live in those small cities, you know, I think  
24 they have less access of going into the office and know  
25 very little about it when you're living in Mendota,



1 Firebaugh, and so forth.

2           One situation of where there is inclusion because  
3 we have an issue and folks can collaborate now and I was  
4 telling some friends the other day about the latest -- I  
5 really think that's great because whether the farmers were  
6 against the farm workers in Delano and the UFW, it was  
7 split. And do you know that they were all walking to  
8 Sacramento, farm workers out on the great west side  
9 walking with farmers to come to Sacramento. I said, my  
10 goodness, what a difference a day makes. Because they  
11 used to not even talk to each other. But they got that  
12 one issue of people out of work and farmers can't get  
13 water, and now they're going hand in hand.

14           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: That sort of is the  
15 perfect segue into my next question which is what unique  
16 circumstances or interest distinguish the San Joaquin  
17 Valley from the rest of the state?

18           DR. ALDREDGE: Agriculture versus rural versus  
19 urban, and the numbers. For example, you're talking about  
20 the Board of Equalization, the Los Angeles has one  
21 district office all of their own from their population.  
22 There's some others thrown in and then you go back -- and  
23 we often forget as I do as a person living in the valley  
24 north of San Francisco when you go up to Humboldt County  
25 and all that, that is really rural, you know.

1           And so we're talking about the need for the state  
2 to have a rural policy that's positive as well as an urban  
3 policy. And those folks in those small counties up at  
4 Humboldt and all the rest of them I believe need the  
5 services and need to be included a lot more.

6           Right now -- no disrespect to how it is formed --  
7 but the large population centers get the benefits. Just  
8 looking at Fresno County, we used to fight the situation  
9 of let's be fair as we can. Even League of California  
10 Cities -- League of California Cities -- and let's not do  
11 everything in Fresno.

12           And that's the same thing of the Health Policy  
13 Institute of Fresno State of which I was a part of and the  
14 first Chairperson. You just can't keep doing it in the  
15 big city, because you're cutting folks out and they don't  
16 feel a part of a regional effort. So rural versus urban  
17 and this is a big state geographically.

18           And we have to somehow do more for those rural  
19 residents and new residents into the geographical  
20 community. West Fresno as an example, demographics have  
21 really changed, because that's kind of a port of entry.  
22 You go to Fresno, you're low income, you try to kind  
23 something in west Fresno.

24           Another calloused part of agency doesn't relate  
25 to what you said, but in that area, you do have a lot of

1 folks who work in agriculture and so forth. And they're  
2 suffering because of what's happening with the water and  
3 so forth. So rural and urban is a big issue I think in  
4 California. Nobody's fault. But you get Alpine, the  
5 smallest populated versus -- what is it -- los Angeles or  
6 something with the largest and it's hard to deal with.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you. I don't have  
8 any further questions. Panelists?

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You have five minutes if  
12 you'd like to make a closing statement.

13 DR. ALDREDGE: Thank you very much for allowing  
14 me to come today. I think we've covered just about  
15 everything that needed to be stated.

16 And this is not like campaign speech in college  
17 where you run for student body president. But if  
18 selected, I believe that I can do a good job on the  
19 Commission.

20 So with that, I want to thank you. And I think  
21 I'm qualified and experienced to deal with some of the  
22 issues and I have a big concern about what happens to  
23 folks that aren't included in the system. Can't continue  
24 that for much longer. Thank you very much.

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you so much for

1 coming today.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We'll recess until 9:14  
5 tomorrow.

6 (whereupon the hearing was recessed)

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